

THE Atlantic

SEPTEMBER 2006

**A NEW STRATEGY
FOR THE FIGHT
AGAINST TERROR**

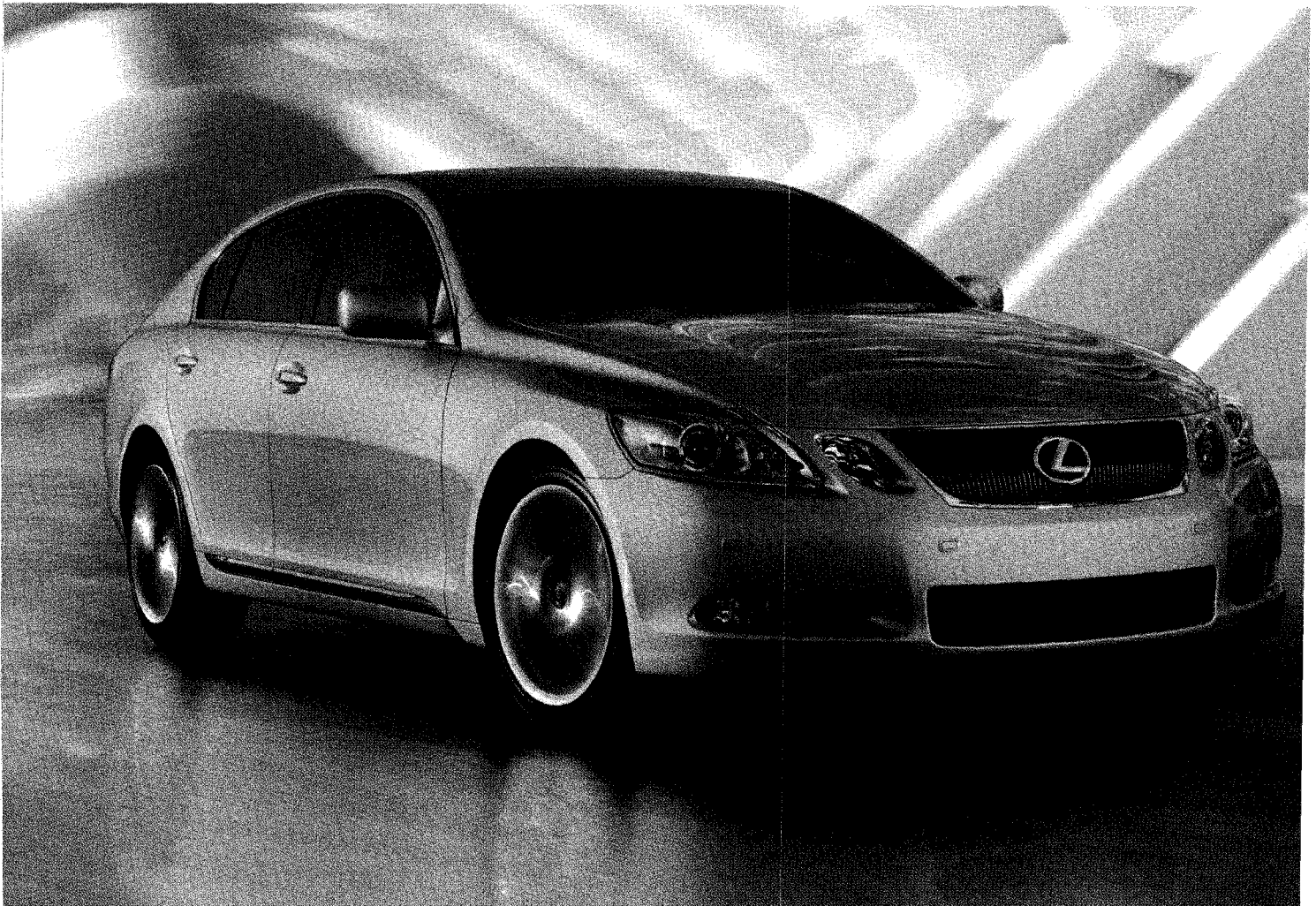
We Win. BY JAMES FALLOWS

AL-QAEDA'S MISTAKES, AND OUR SUCCESSES, HAVE SHARPLY REDUCED THE TERRORIST NETWORK'S ABILITY TO HARM THE UNITED STATES. ITS THREAT NOW RESTS LESS ON WHAT IT CAN DO ITSELF THAN ON WHAT IT CAN TRICK, TEMPT, OR GOAD US INTO DOING. ITS DESTINY IS NO LONGER IN ITS OWN HANDS ...



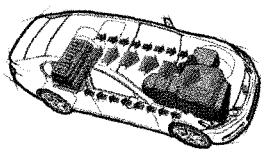
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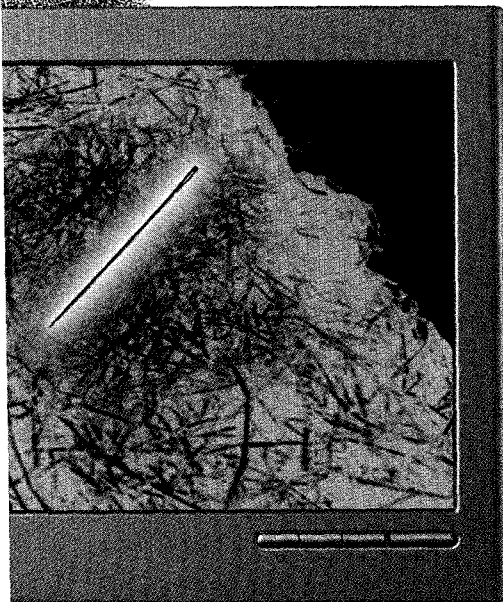
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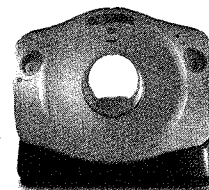


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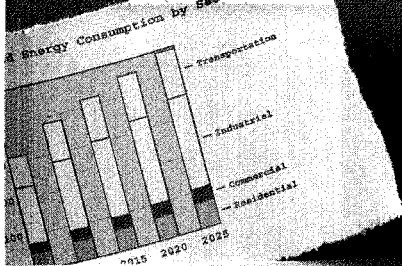
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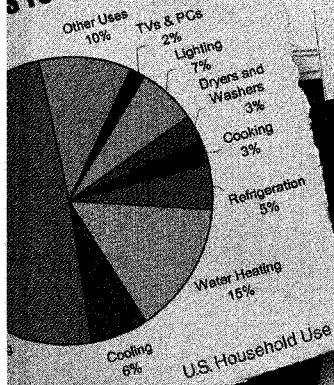
Because of surging economies in the developing world and continued growth among the industrialized nations, global energy use is climbing. As a result, supplies are tight. Prices are rising. And energy users are calling for viable alternatives.

The good news is we've got a huge source of alternative energy all around us. It's called conservation, and it's the lowest cost new source of energy we have at hand. A reduction of just 5% of global energy use would save us the equivalent of over 10 million barrels of oil a day. Clearly, saving energy is like finding it. So how do we do it?

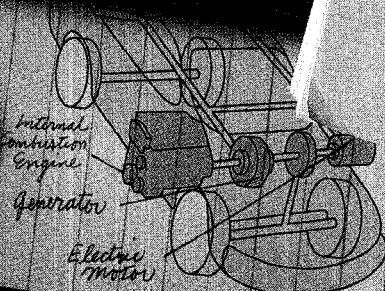
Incorporating energy efficient technology into new construction could reduce consumption by 40%. Governments and businesses must reduce their own energy use and promote conservation to their citizens and employees. Further improvements in fuel efficiency will play a crucial role, too. And the average person wields incredible power when it comes to conserving energy, from driving slower to switching to more efficient home appliances.

Of course, not only does using less energy mean there's more fuel to go around, it also means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The fact is, if everyone began conserving today, we'd see results immediately. We've taken some of the steps needed to get started but we need your help to get the rest of the way.

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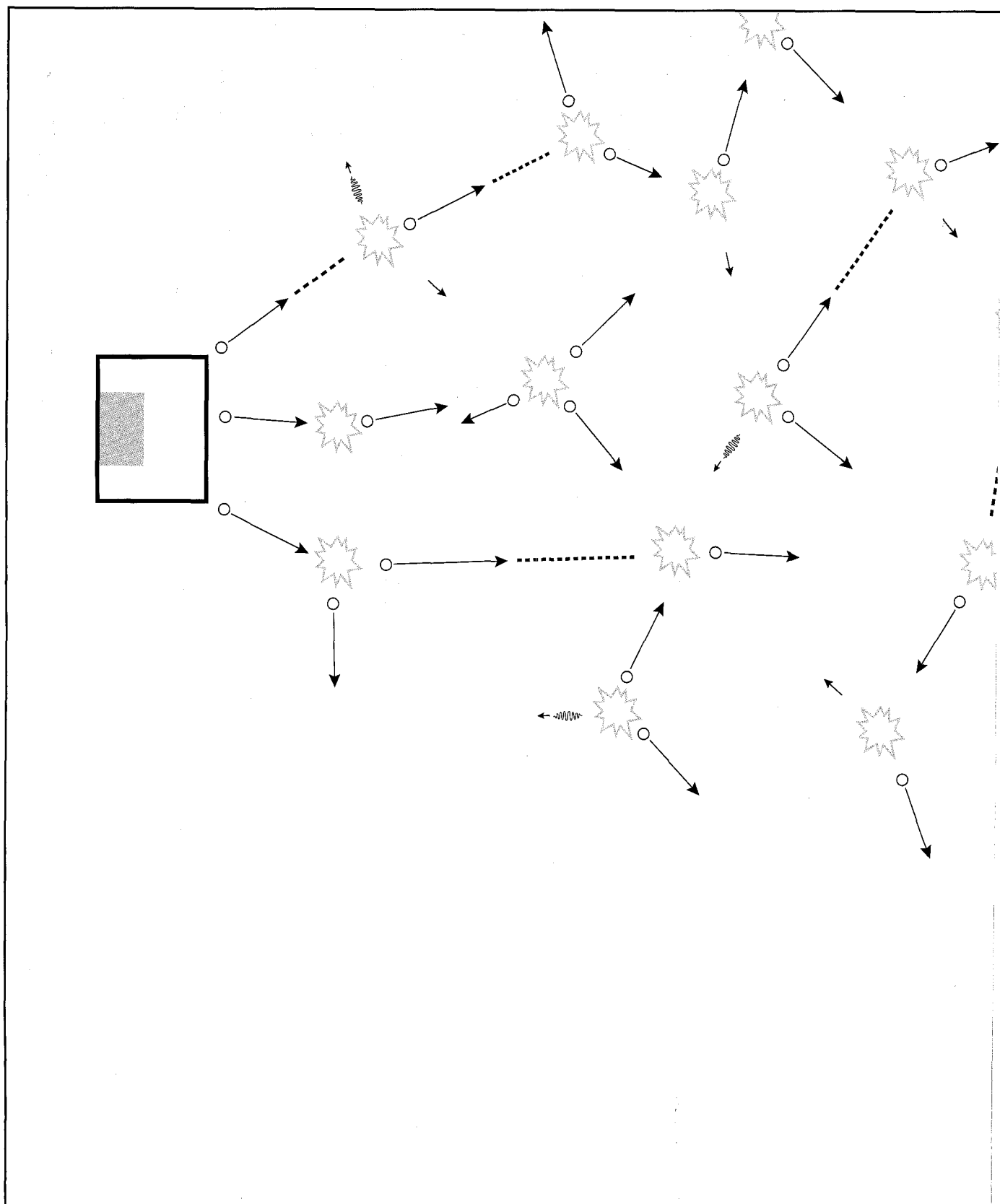
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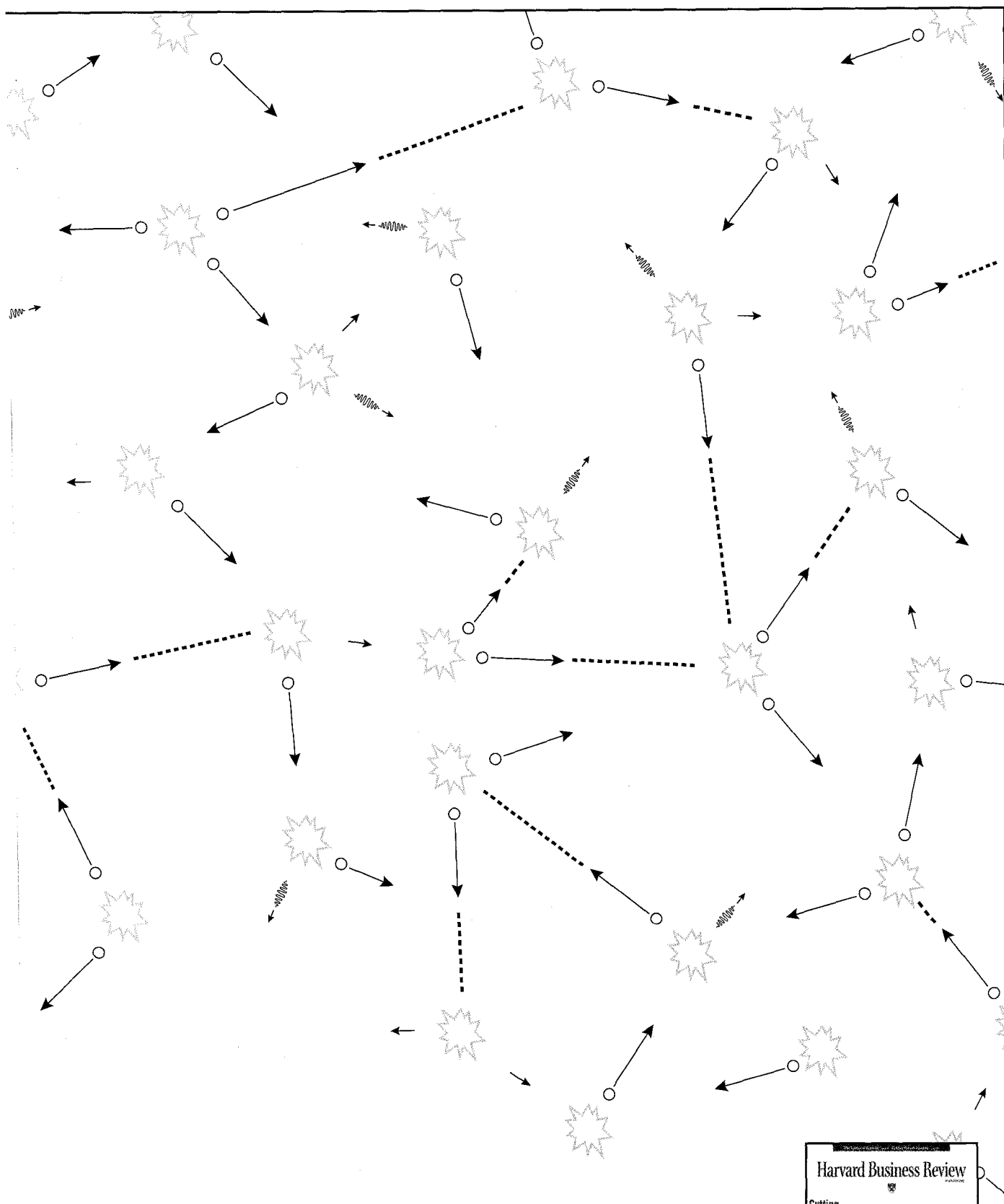
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 - Helping the U.S. government save taxpayers \$151 million while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by an expected 1.5 million tons



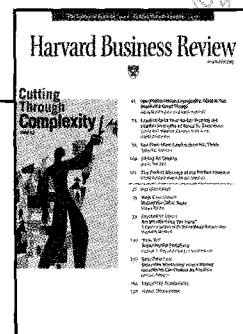
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Michael W. Pendergrass
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INTERVIEW: COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Marshall Poe, author of "The Hive," on Wikipedia and its implications

INTERVIEW: THE CASE FOR DECLARING VICTORY

James Fallows on the surprising strides we've made against al-Qaeda—and why declaring victory will make us safer

TRANSCRIPT: A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL CHERTOFF

See the full text of *Atlantic* contributor Stuart Taylor Jr.'s discussion with the secretary of Homeland Security

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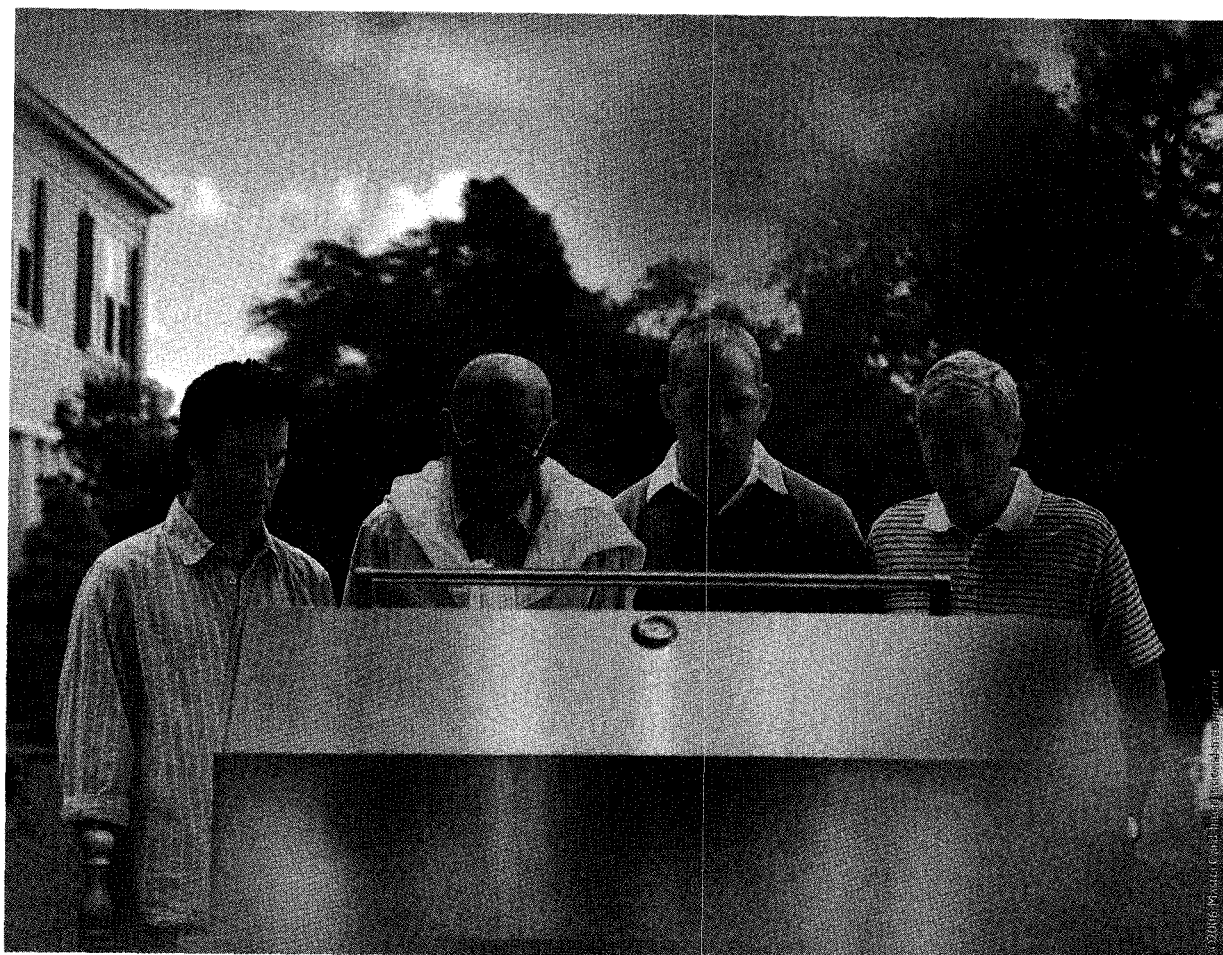
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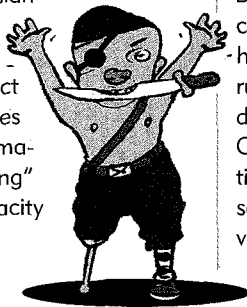
Return to Sender

Italy's long campaign to redress the plunder of antiquity (a job normally left to angry mummies) will get a boost this month if an expected settlement with the Getty Museum—possessor of dozens of supposedly looted items (a couple of griffins, a really old cup, etc.)—goes through. An internal Getty review found that as many as 350 items may have come from shady dealers.

SEPTEMBER 4

Avast, Ye Multinational Consortium!

About a dozen Asian nations have teamed up to fight pirates (of the nautical—not digital—sort). But their strategy could hardly be called swashbuckling. The pact to defend Asian waters, which takes effect today, relies on “information sharing” and “capacity building.”



ALSO THIS MONTH:

Pluto Targeted for Elimination

Can a planet get demoted? We'll know this month. Pluto's status has long been debated—it's smaller than the moon, and bigger objects discovered since haven't received “planet status.” A firm set of rules from the International Astronomical Union is forthcoming.



Border 2.0

The Bush administration hands out the contract for SBInet, the high-tech element of its Secure Border Initiative, featuring unmanned drones, remote cameras, and seismic sensors. Will the multibillion-dollar setup resemble *Star Wars* the movie or “Star Wars” the faulty missile-defense system? Past results—crashed drones, false alarms, broken sensors—aren't encouraging.

Feds vs. Coeds

A federal panel that some feared would create a No Child Left Behind for higher education should have its recommendations submitted this month. Consideration of standardized testing for college students died amid controversy, but efforts to coax universities toward easily comparable performance benchmarks remain in place.

SEPTEMBER 5

Must-Sí TV

In their quest to produce trashy pleasures, TV execs are betting that Spanish-language telenovelas—short-running soaps with rags-to-riches heroines and lots of heaving bosoms—will translate into English. Those programs will be the mainstay of a new Fox network, My Network TV, that launches today.

SEPTEMBER 5

After the Fire

The co-owner of Rhode Island's Station nightclub goes on trial today for his role in a 2003 blaze that killed 100 guests when pyrotechnics at a Great White rock show got out of hand.

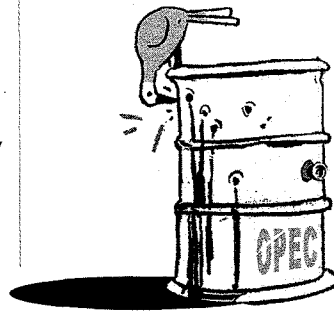
SEPTEMBER 5

Legal Limbo

During the fall session, which convenes today, Congress hopes to vote on a new set of rules for trying Guantánamo detainees. The Supreme Court nixed the administration's “military commission” scheme in June because it violated the Geneva Conventions and standard military court-martial procedure.

CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD



SEPTEMBER 11

Knocking on OPEC's Door

OPEC may gain a larger share of world oil markets as it considers several oily suitors today. Ecuador, which quit the consortium in 1992, could be wooed back. Bolivia, Angola, and Sudan may eventually join too.

SEPTEMBER 12

UN Reform Necessary for UN Reform

The General Assembly convenes today, and Kofi Annan's ambitious plan to streamline budgeting and personnel at the UN could be tied up in red tape, after a bloc of 132 developing countries, fearful of losing power, demanded more paperwork about the proposal. Major donors to the world body, led by the U.S., have threatened to cut off money if the changes don't go through.

SEPTEMBER 15

Having Our Yellowcake, Eating It Too

The U.S. hopes a new treaty at the Conference on Disarmament, which

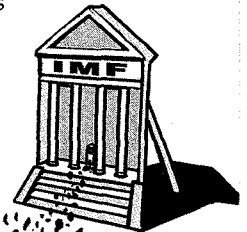


ends today, will strengthen its hand against Iran and other nuclear proliferators by banning production of weapons-grade fuel. Why that might not happen: the U.S. has ignored such issues as its own nuclear stockpiles, the weaponization of space, and guarantees that nuclear powers (like the U.S.) won't attack nonnuclear ones (like Iran).

SEPTEMBER 19–20

Opening Up the IMF

The IMF and the World Bank, long accused of bullying small countries, are set to give emerging and midsize economies a bit more voting clout at this meeting; China, South Korea, Mexico, and Turkey may gain at Europe's expense.



SEPTEMBER 25

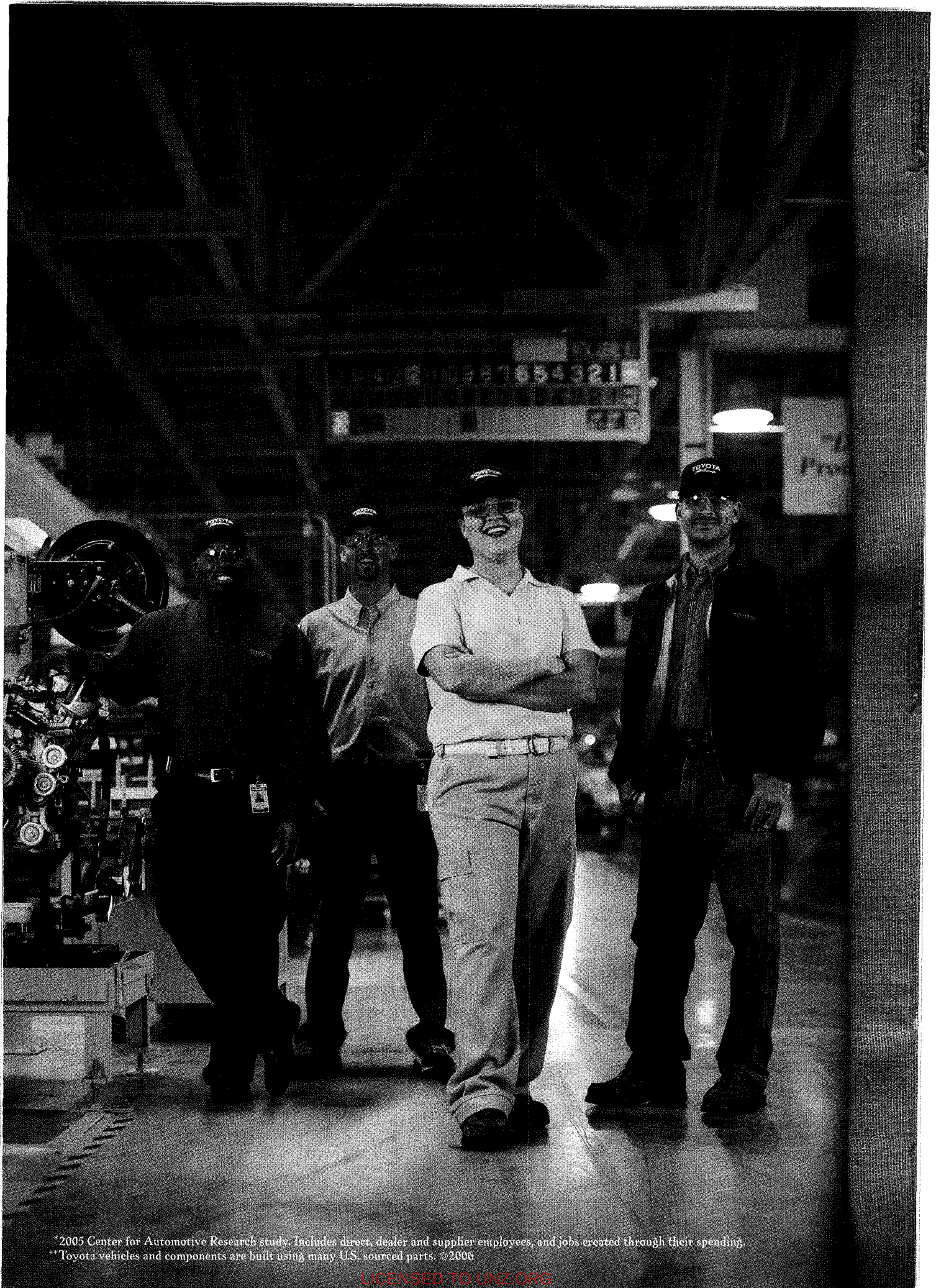
Back to the Superdome

With much of New Orleans still devastated, the refurbished Superdome—a symbol of desperation after Hurricane Katrina—is set to reopen tonight for *Monday Night Football* (Saints vs. Falcons).

SEPTEMBER 30

Dithering Over Darfur

The African Union's peace-keeping mandate in Darfur expires today. The UN may take over the assignment ... or it may not. Russia and China have been skittish about UN involvement, and Sudan has not approved the plan. —MATTHEW QUIRK



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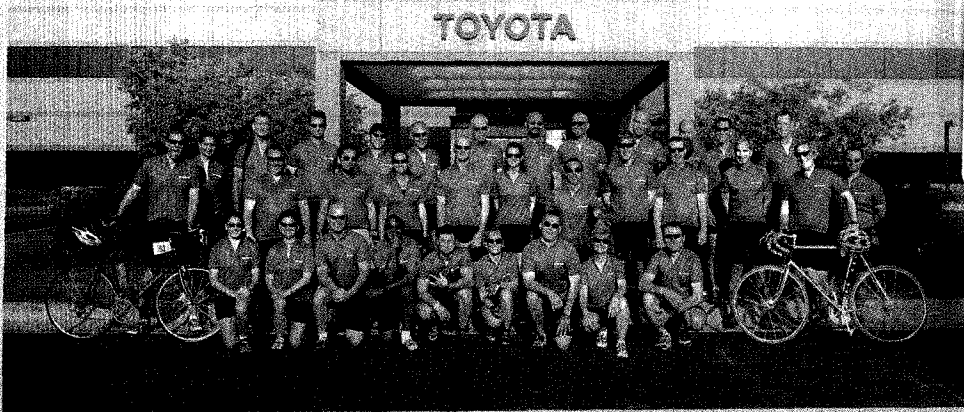
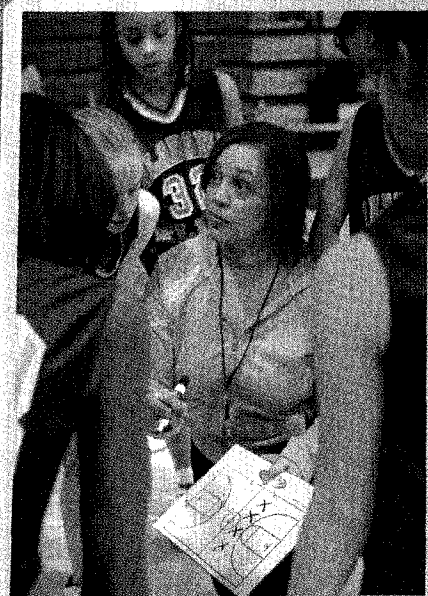


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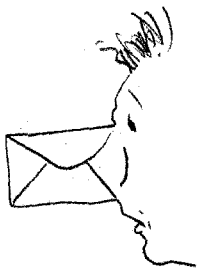
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Education of Ali al-Timimi

Milton Viorst would like us to think that Salafism—one of the most rigid forms of Islam—isn't all that extreme, and that Ali al-Timimi, the most devout and spiritual of young men, was able to separate the "religious" from the "political" ("The Education of Ali al-Timimi," June *Atlantic*). No mean feat, since Islam itself recognizes no such division. He would also like us to know that, although affiliated with Wahabbism, the radical Islam of the Saudis, al-Timimi had absolutely no interest in waging violent jihad. In fact, insists Viorst, taking the word of al-Timimi's friend, he was more intrigued by the concept of *ijihad*—the desire to revise Islamic law.

But al-Timimi's words, quoted at length in the article, point us in a completely different direction. Rather than wanting to "reform" Islam, he seemed eager to assert its primacy over all other religions, and to see sharia—Islamic law—take precedence over man-made law. How could he not, committed as he was to the tenets of Salafism?

Mindy G. Alter
Toronto, Ontario

I last sat with Ali al-Timimi shortly before the announcement of the verdict in his trial. He had shown up unexpectedly to attend the celebration of a newborn child in our community. We were joined by another Muslim, like myself an American professional converted to Islam in midlife. We shared lamb and rice, and al-Timimi spoke softly with us, shrugging off speculation regarding the impending outcome of his trial. Certainly, he wanted to return to his studies and to teaching, to his work and to his family, but he was pleased with whatever his Lord had chosen for him. He politely indulged

our questions and concern, yet repeatedly turned the conversation from the trial to his worries over how America had changed and the great difficulties he saw for all Americans. The America of his youth, spent in part in the home of Milton Viorst, was, he feared, much threatened.

My first contact with al-Timimi had been ten years earlier. Though I had been Muslim for only two years then, I was familiar with the thinking and teaching of many in the Muslim world. As the voice of al-Timimi poured forth from a cassette of one of his lectures, I realized that here was something different. I could not find the posturing of the mystic, the rant of the fanatic, the self-indulgent intellectual ramblings of the freethinker. Nor could I find politics, current events, or obsession with conflict. Rather, the impression was of a tongue struggling in vain to get the knowledge out—pure religious knowledge. It was an ecstatic experience, a treasured memory, and, as it turned out, one shared by many in the English-speaking Muslim community.

Abdullah Brown
Herndon, Va.

A fair and impartial jury found unanimously that the United States proved all the charges against Ali al-Timimi beyond a reasonable doubt. The verdict was based on relevant, reliable, and overwhelming evidence of his guilt. This evidence was presented in the course of a trial at which al-Timimi was represented by vigorous and skilled attorneys. The trial was presided over by a fair and impartial judge—who later upheld all the verdicts against all of al-Timimi's challenges. If *The Atlantic's* readers had seen and heard the evidence introduced at trial, they would have a very different view of this case and of al-Timimi than what Viorst

depicted. That is precisely why these decisions are left to juries, guided by judges, rather than to journalists.

Chuck Rosenberg
U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Virginia
Alexandria, Va.

Milton Viorst replies:

Mr. Rosenberg reminds me of when my friend Barbara told her family, forty years ago, that my colleague Steve had proposed marriage to her, and her mother's comment was, "Just a journalist?" Since then Steve and I, along with our wives, have often laughed at the line. Mr. Rosenberg makes me laugh again. Among the responsibilities of journalists is watching out for the excesses of public officials, from which injustice can result, as I think it did in the al-Timimi case. Mr. Rosenberg has his duties; I have mine.

The Management Myth

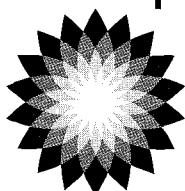
Matthew Stewart confuses the shallow brand of management consulting he peddled with graduate business education ("The Management Myth," June *Atlantic*). The vast majority of M.B.A.s do not aspire to a career in management consulting, nor are most business-school curricula laden with the pseudoscientific literature he so readily cites. His belief that a liberal-arts education is more fitting training for managers reflects his limited experience in the business world. Nietzsche isn't going to cut it when you have to discount the cash flows of a complex capital budgeting problem, implement a new software system, or navigate the current thicket of employment law. For real problems, real skills are needed, though they may certainly be acquired in a venue other than graduate business school.

Tim Semple
North Pomfret, Vt.

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Matthew Stewart's critique of case-study management education is based on a single case study: namely, himself. Since he studied philosophy and apparently succeeded in a consulting business, he argues that everyone else should follow the same path. But a sample of one proves nothing. Stewart also seems to have fallen into the trap of assuming that what goes on at the Harvard Business School is the quintessence of management education. But other leading business schools, such as Chicago and Stanford, stress basic disciplines and analytical techniques rather than case studies. Their rigorous versions of management education differ profoundly from the one that Stewart lampoons.

And given what passes for philosophy these days at most colleges, imagine the outcome if everyone followed Stewart's advice: a whole generation of business managers thinking and communicating like Derrida, Foucault, de Man, and the rest of that deconstructionist, postmodernist gang. I am going to lay in a supply of earplugs.

James Horrigan

*Professor Emeritus, Accounting & Finance
University of New Hampshire
Portsmouth, N.H.*

While dismissing the "core competencies" taught in M.B.A. programs as outdated and theoretical, Matthew Stewart demonstrates core incompetencies in the very skills he was supposed to have gained in such a program. The subtitle of the piece suggests the author will explore the correlation between an M.B.A. degree and "success in business." Instead, Stewart focuses on just one career path and a handful of management theories. He claims to have applied statistical methodology in his study, but his hypothesis regarding the value of an M.B.A. education is tested with insights gained from summer reading and hearsay from former colleagues. Perhaps "sampling error" is not a buzzword the author learned in his former career. One hopes that the future armies of philosophers storming the world of business will bring sharper analysis to the front line.

David Armitage

Los Angeles, Calif.

As a professor of management I found Matthew Stewart's critique of management research and theory to be a delightfully engaging but ultimately disappointing read. He is dead-on in his various criticisms, but eventually the cynic needs to come up with a better alternative than the one he is dissing. Stewart asserts, "Rousseau and Shakespeare said it all much, much better." But what is the "all" that Rousseau and Shakespeare said better? Stewart does not give us much help, other than to note that humans seem to have a tendency to be ugly to each other as they engage in corporate versions of civil war.

I am not looking for a "three-point program," but I would like to see Stewart do more than confirm what Dilbert has already pointed out with devastating clarity in hundreds of cartoons.

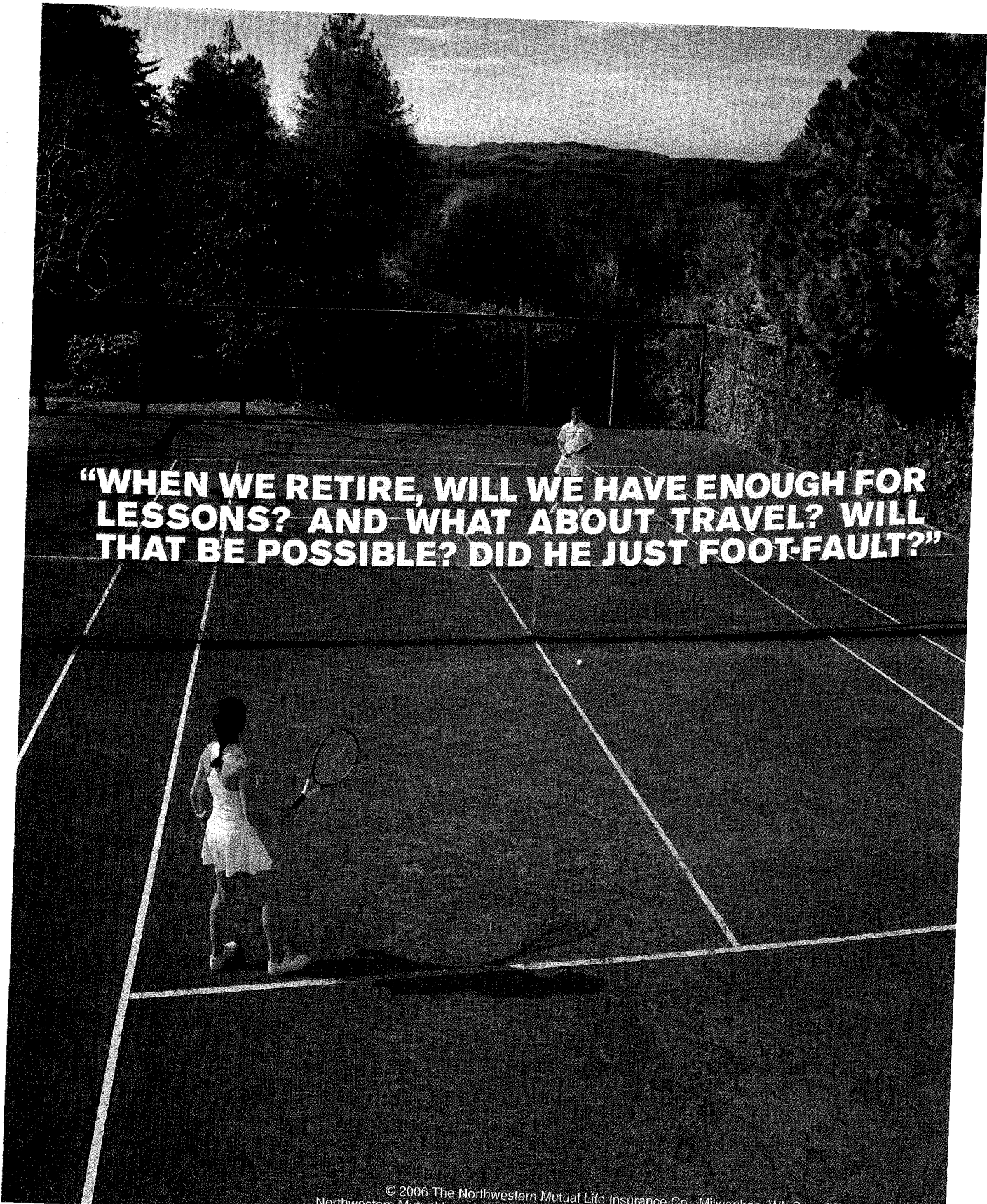
George Lehman

*Howard Raid Professor of Business
Bluffton University
Bluffton, Ohio*

Matthew Stewart replies:

Whether or not you believe your correspondent suffers from limited business experience, as Mr. Semple presumes, the fact remains that the management professions are rife with paradox: so-called experts who peddle faddish platitudes, consultants who offer advice on businesses about which they know little, and CEOs who reward themselves lavishly come good times or bad. To be sure, some of these paradoxes can and should be explained away. I'm still waiting.

Prof. Horrigan seems intent on rescuing the honor of management education by casting the Harvard Business School overboard—surely a drastic measure. Mr. Semple insists that success in business requires real skills, but then abandons the business schools altogether when he acknowledges that such skills "may certainly be acquired" elsewhere. He misses the mark when he dismisses consulting as being of interest only to an insignificant minority of business-school students. In a recent Fortune poll in which M.B.A. students were asked to name the sector in which they would like to work, consulting came in first, with 25 percent of the votes. Mr. Armitage has taken my claims to statistical rigor a little too seriously, and further seems to think that only a statistical-correlation analysis will yield answers about the worth



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of management education. While such studies have been performed and do have some value, the idea that they exhaust the analysis of the subject is about as fine an example as I can name of the drive for specious precision that characterizes so much of management thought. Personal testimonials and historical analysis have their limits too, but to dismiss them out of hand, as Prof. Horrigan does, as a "sample of one" is just pseudo-rigor.

Some of the confusion in the discussion stems from my decision to cover the distinct activities of management theory, management consulting, and management education in a single article. It would be a mistake to assign all the sins of the theorists to the business schools, as Mr. Semple notes, since the schools do more than just pass along the theory. My aim in treating all of these activities together, however, was not to pass a single judgment on all, but to examine the way the fundamental idea of "management" manifests itself in each.

My critics do score some points against academic philosophy—points that I willingly concede. I, too, would lay in a set of earplugs, if, as Prof. Horrigan warns, business managers began imitating Derrida & Company. To identify all philosophy with the postmodernist gang, however, seems even less accurate than to equate all management education with the Harvard Business School.

Prof. Lehman is right to point out that my article offers more criticism than it does a constructive program. To this I plead, first, that there is value in supplying a corrective to the incredible lack of self-criticism that characterizes the management world, and second, that perhaps he will consider buying my next book, in which I plan to offer a solution to all management problems.

Life After Roe

Jeffrey Rosen repeatedly labels as "draconian" measures that would protect unborn children and guarantee their most basic human rights ("The Day After Roe," June *Atlantic*). From the standpoint of these children, it is our current abortion jurisprudence that is draconian. During the first nine months of a child's life, the present system offers virtually no legal protection against being killed.

The oft-heard response that children in the prenatal stages of development

are not actually persons is illiberal, to say the least. This is the same argument that was used against African Americans in the *Dred Scott* case. The Supreme Court held that Negroes had no rights because they were not really persons.

Advocates of legal abortion may reply that the African Americans in question were already born, whereas unborn children are still inside their mothers' bodies and therefore are not yet persons. But this argument merely substitutes age for skin color as the criterion by which we may deem someone a nonperson and claim him or her as our private property to dispose of as we please. In both cases, an arbitrary line has been drawn to exclude a whole class of human beings from the community of our common care and concern.

Kathryn Scharplaz
Minneapolis, Kans.

In Jeffrey Rosen's view, a future Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* would merely "allo[w] the states to ban or restrict abortions from the very beginning of pregnancy," and in most states, "early-term abortions would be protected and late-term ones restricted." But there is no assurance that a decision overturning *Roe* would be that deferential to the legislative process. Rosen's pro-democratic vision reminds me of a debate early this year in Manhattan on the Alito nomination, sponsored by rival groups of lawyers, the Federalist Society, and the American Constitution Society. The pro-Alito advocate repeatedly argued against *Roe v. Wade* on the grounds that democratically elected state legislatures should shape our responses to morally sensitive life-and-death matters like abortion. However, when asked whether the Oregon assisted-suicide law, enacted by such a legislature and twice upheld by referendum votes, should be upheld out of deference to state legislatures, she backed away and, much like Chief Justice John Roberts, argued that in that case the federal interest in regulating lethal drugs could override democratic lawmaking.

Her reply suggested that when pro-lifers are faced with a choice between rule by state legislatures and rule by federal judges, their only meaningful

standard is the desired pro-life result. While I respect the pro-democratic logic of Rosen's analysis, I don't think he has considered the extent to which many pro-life lawyers and judges have decided that their moral vision trumps deference to democracy and legislators.

Jonathan S. Gellman
Riverdale, N.Y.

Jeffrey Rosen replies:

As these letters suggest, there are entrenched views on both sides of the abortion issue that are not likely to be changed by democratic debate. My piece suggested, however, that if Roe were overturned, legislatures would eventually—although not immediately—reflect the more moderate views of the majority of Americans, protecting the right to choose abortion early in pregnancy and restricting it later in pregnancy.

Bombers Over Germany

Benjamin Schwarz's review of A. C. Grayling's *Among the Dead Cities* (June *Atlantic*) didn't address the reason the British switched over to nighttime area bombing in the first place. Early in the war, the Royal Air Force attempted precision daylight bombing of legitimate targets such as military depots and armaments factories. The Luftwaffe's day fighters slaughtered the pathetically under-armed RAF bombers. To save the lives of the aircrews, Bomber Command had no choice but to switch to night operations.

However, although night's concealing cloak gave the bomber crews a better chance of surviving a given mission, it did nothing for their ability to hit a target. They had trouble finding the target, much less bombing it: there are cases on record where villages of no military significance fifty miles from the target were bombed in error, setting fires on the ground, following which the entire bomber stream dropped its payload on the hapless village because the bombers' crews thought the fires *had* to be the target.

Given these two factors—quite aside from Arthur "Bomber" Harris's deeply held belief that by bombing the dwellings of the German workforce he could break Germany's morale—it was almost



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inevitable that the RAF would bomb wide areas instead of pinpoint targets. For Grayling and Schwarz to ignore the technical factors involved in this decision is irresponsible. Why attribute to deliberate malice—though there was enough of that in Harris's bombing policy—what can be explained by simple necessity?

Roy Jaruk
Patterson, N.Y.

Benjamin Schwarz replies:

Mr. Jaruk's arguments are chronologically confused. Certainly, early in the war the RAF lacked the tools and the doctrine to undertake precision bombing against German targets. But at that point it was unable to carry out an area-bombing offensive as well. Area bombing wasn't a strategy to which the RAF turned because it couldn't bomb precisely. Rather, it was a strategy—really a theory, embraced for honest if somewhat erroneous reasons—for which it had to develop a capability. Mr. Jaruk suggests that area bombing damaged civilian targets almost incidentally. Nothing of the sort. The theory of area bombing, "an absolutely devastating, exterminating attack by very heavy bombers . . . upon the Nazi homeland," as Churchill put it, was predicated on massacring or threatening to massacre civilians.

Area bombing only began in earnest in mid-1943, after the British and the Americans decided at the January Casablanca conference to launch an all-out "combined bomber offensive" (largely to appease their Soviet allies, who were clamoring for an offensive in the West), and when Bomber Command at last had the resources and the equipment (a large fleet of heavy bombers and sophisticated navigational aids) to bomb on the scale that the theory of area bombing demanded. Grayling's indictment of area bombing begins at this date, not, as Mr. Jaruk would have it, "[e]arly in the war." Further undermining Mr. Jaruk's "simple necessity" argument is the fact that at this point, when the RAF began its intense area-bombing efforts, the U.S. Army Air Force began its intense daylight precision-bombing campaign against Germany. Moreover, in the period from the autumn of 1943 to the spring of 1944, the USAAF's newly deployed long-range fighters effectively demolished the Luftwaffe's fighter force. This meant that during the strategic bombing offensive that began in

September 1944 (from late winter 1944 until the fall, Allied bombing efforts concentrated almost exclusively on tactical support of the Normandy invasion), the skies above the Reich were essentially free of the German fighter menace that Mr. Jaruk maintains impelled Bomber Command's area-bombing strategy in the first place. Still, the RAF's area bombing continued for another seven months, until the last days of the war—even as the USAAF's precision-bombing efforts were demolishing Germany's transport systems, its armaments industry, and, most important, its oil facilities. This was the period in which Bomber Command's forces inflicted by far their heaviest damage on German civilians (72 percent of Allied bombs dropped on Germany throughout the war were dropped after July 1944), and this is the period—again, a period when the threat of German fighters had been eliminated, and when precision bombing would have been relatively easy—on which Grayling concentrates his indictment.

Natural-Born Footballers

I greatly enjoyed Geoffrey Wheatcroft's essay "Non-native Sons" (June *Atlantic*), but I would like to point out one small error regarding the 1968 Manchester United team he mentions in passing. Wheatcroft describes the team as including only two non-English players, but Paddy Crerand, who like Denis Law is from Scotland, was also on the pitch that day for the Red Devils when they hoisted the cup. (As you can see, my interest in this matter is purely relative.)

Patrick J. Crerand
Lafayette, La.

Geoffrey Wheatcroft replies:

My usual response when detected in error is Samuel Johnson's "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance," but in this case I can't even use that excuse, since I remember the 1968 European Cup final vividly and know exactly who played for Manchester United. Apart from Law and Best, the team of course included Mr. Crerand's illustrious kinsman Paddy, and also Shay Brennan, who was English-born but played for the Republic of Ireland. My mistake was the clumsy wording "international only in that it included . . ." This was not meant to sug-

gest that all the players except Law and Best were English. I can do no more than thank Mr. Crerand and apologize: Faulty syntax, sir; pure faulty syntax.

The Libertarian West

In "Purple Mountains" (July/August *Atlantic*), Ryan Sager completely mischaracterizes New Mexico, describing it as a previously reliable Republican state that is now morphing into a swing state. But New Mexico has *always* been a swing state: it has voted for the loser in only two presidential elections (in 1976 and 2000) since it became a state. Its electoral votes have gone to the Democrats twelve times and to the Republicans twelve times—which is about as evenhanded as it gets.

Ray Minner
Collegedale, Tenn.

Ryan Sager replies:

Mr. Minner mistakes the sweep of my argument about the interior West's recent redness. In fact, 2004 was the first election since 1988 in which a Republican candidate has won all eight states of the interior West. Al Gore won New Mexico in 2000; in 1996, in the course of a handy reelection, Bill Clinton won New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada; in 1992, Clinton won New Mexico, Colorado, Montana, and Nevada. From 1968 to 1988, however, the Republican presidential candidate won every single interior West state for six elections running. My argument was that just as the South (never 100 percent Democratic, but "solid" nonetheless) once realigned in favor of the GOP, the West has the potential to birth a Democratic resurgence in the not-too-distant future.

Editors' Note:

An illustration accompanying "A Confederacy of Eunuchs" (July/August *Atlantic*) erroneously depicted Paul Martin as the current prime minister of Canada. Martin in fact left office in February, and was succeeded by Stephen Harper. In "Idealism and Practicality" (July/August *Atlantic*), the political scientist Stanley Hoffmann's surname was misspelled. The July/August *Atlantic* was inaccurately identified as "Vol. 297, No. 6." The issue should have been labeled "Vol. 298, No. 1." We regret the errors.

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THE AGENDA

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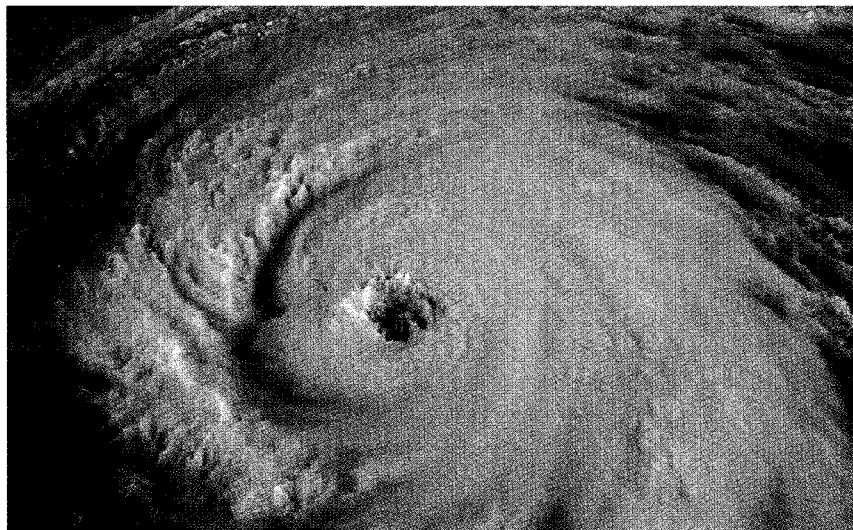
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COMMENT

Some Convenient Truths

*Runaway global warming looks all but unstoppable.
Maybe that's because we haven't really tried to stop it*

BY GREGG EASTERBROOK

If there is now a scientific consensus that global warming must be taken seriously, there is also a related political consensus: that the issue is Gloom City. In *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore warns of sea levels rising to engulf New York and San Francisco and implies that only wrenching lifestyle sacrifice can save us. The opposing view is just as glum. Even mild restrictions on greenhouse gases could "cripple our economy," Republican Senator Kit Bond of Missouri said in 2003. Other conservatives suggest that greenhouse-gas rules for Americans would be pointless anyway, owing to increased fossil-fuel use in China and India. When commentators hash this issue out, it's often a contest to see which side can sound more pessimistic.

Here's a different way of thinking about the greenhouse effect: that action to prevent runaway global warming may

prove cheap, practical, effective, and totally consistent with economic growth. Which makes a body wonder: Why is such environmental optimism absent from American political debate?

Greenhouse gases are an air-pollution problem—and all previous air-pollution problems have been reduced faster and more cheaply than predicted, without economic harm. Some of these problems once seemed scary and intractable, just as greenhouse gases seem today. About forty years ago urban smog was increasing so fast that President Lyndon Johnson warned, "Either we stop poisoning our air or we become a nation [in] gas masks groping our way through dying cities." During Ronald Reagan's presidency, emissions of chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, threatened to deplete the stratospheric ozone layer. As recently as George H. W. Bush's administration,

acid rain was said to threaten a "new silent spring" of dead Appalachian forests.

But in each case, strong regulations were enacted, and what happened? Since 1970, smog-forming air pollution has declined by a third to a half. Emissions of CFCs have been nearly eliminated, and studies suggest that ozone-layer replenishment is beginning. Acid rain, meanwhile, has declined by a third since 1990, while Appalachian forest health has improved sharply.

Most progress against air pollution has been cheaper than expected. Smog controls on automobiles, for example, were predicted to cost thousands of dollars for each vehicle. Today's new cars emit less than 2 percent as much smog-forming pollution as the cars of 1970, and the cars are still as affordable today as they were then. Acid-rain control has cost about 10 percent of what was predicted in 1990, when Congress enacted new rules. At that time, opponents said the regulations would cause a "clean-air recession"; instead, the economy boomed.

Greenhouse gases, being global, are the biggest air-pollution problem ever faced. And because widespread fossil-fuel use is inevitable for some time to come, the best-case scenario for the next few decades may be a slowing of the rate of greenhouse-gas buildup, to prevent runaway climate change. Still, the basic pattern observed in all other forms of air-pollution control—rapid progress at low cost—should repeat for greenhouse-gas controls.

Yet a paralyzing negativism dominates global-warming politics. Environmentalists depict climate change as nearly unstoppable; skeptics speak of the problem as either imaginary (the "greatest hoax ever perpetrated," in the words of Senator James Inhofe, chairman of the Senate's environment committee) or ruinously expensive to address.

Even conscientious politicians may struggle for views that aren't dismal. Mandy Grunwald, a Democratic political consultant, says, "When political candidates talk about new energy sources, they use a positive, can-do vocabulary. Voters have personal experience with energy use, so they can relate to discussion of solutions. If you say a car can use a new kind of fuel, this makes intuitive

sense to people. But global warming is of such scale and magnitude, people don't have any commonsense way to grasp what the solutions would be. So political candidates tend to talk about the greenhouse effect in a depressing way."

One reason the global-warming problem seems so daunting is that the success of previous antipollution efforts remains something of a secret. Polls show that Americans think the air is getting dirtier, not cleaner, perhaps because media coverage of the environment rarely if ever mentions improvements. For instance, did you know that smog and acid rain have continued to diminish throughout George W. Bush's presidency?

One might expect Democrats to trumpet the decline of air pollution, which stands as one of government's leading postwar achievements. But just as Republicans have found they can bash Democrats by falsely accusing them of being soft on defense, Democrats have found they can bash Republicans by falsely accusing them of destroying the environment. If that's your argument, you might skip over the evidence that many environmental trends are positive. One might also expect Republicans to trumpet the reduction of air pollution, since it signifies responsible behavior by industry. But to acknowledge that air pollution has declined would require Republicans to say the words, "The regulations worked."

Does it matter that so many in politics seem so pessimistic about the prospect of addressing global warming? Absolutely. Making the problem appear unsolvable encourages a sort of listless fatalism, blunting the drive to take first steps toward a solution. Historically, first steps against air pollution have often led to pleasant surprises. When Congress, in 1970, mandated major reductions in smog caused by automobiles, even many supporters of the rule feared it would be hugely expensive. But the catalytic converter was not practical then; soon it was perfected, and suddenly, major reductions in smog became affordable. Even a small step by the United States against greenhouse gases could lead to a similar breakthrough.

And to those who worry that any greenhouse-gas reductions in the United States will be swamped by new emissions

from China and India, here's a final reason to be optimistic: technology can move across borders with considerable speed. Today it's not clear that American inventors or entrepreneurs can make money by reducing greenhouse gases, so relatively few are trying. But suppose the United States regulated greenhouse gases, using its own domestic program, not the cumbersome Kyoto Protocol; then America's formidable entrepreneurial and engineering communities would fully engage the problem. Innovations pioneered here could spread throughout the world, and suddenly rapid global warming would not seem inevitable.

The two big technical advances against smog—the catalytic converter and the chemical engineering that removes pollutants from gasoline at the refinery stage—were invented in the United States. The big economic advance against acid rain—a credit-trading system that gives power-plant managers a profit incentive to reduce pollution—was pioneered here as well. These advances are now spreading globally. Smog and acid rain are still increasing in some parts of the world, but the trend lines suggest that both will decline fairly soon, even in developing nations. For instance, two decades ago urban smog was rising at a dangerous rate in Mexico; today it is diminishing there, though the country's population continues to grow. A short time ago declining smog and acid rain in developing nations seemed an impossibility; today declining greenhouse gases seem an impossibility. The history of air-pollution control says otherwise.

Americans love challenges, and preventing artificial climate change is just the sort of technological and economic challenge at which this nation excels. It only remains for the right politician to recast the challenge in practical, optimistic tones. Gore seldom has, and Bush seems to have no interest in trying. But cheap and fast improvement is not a pipe dream; it is the pattern of previous efforts against air pollution. The only reason runaway global warming seems unstoppable is that we have not yet tried to stop it. ▀

Gregg Easterbrook is a contributing editor of The Atlantic, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, and the author of The Progress Paradox.



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Go West, Young Han

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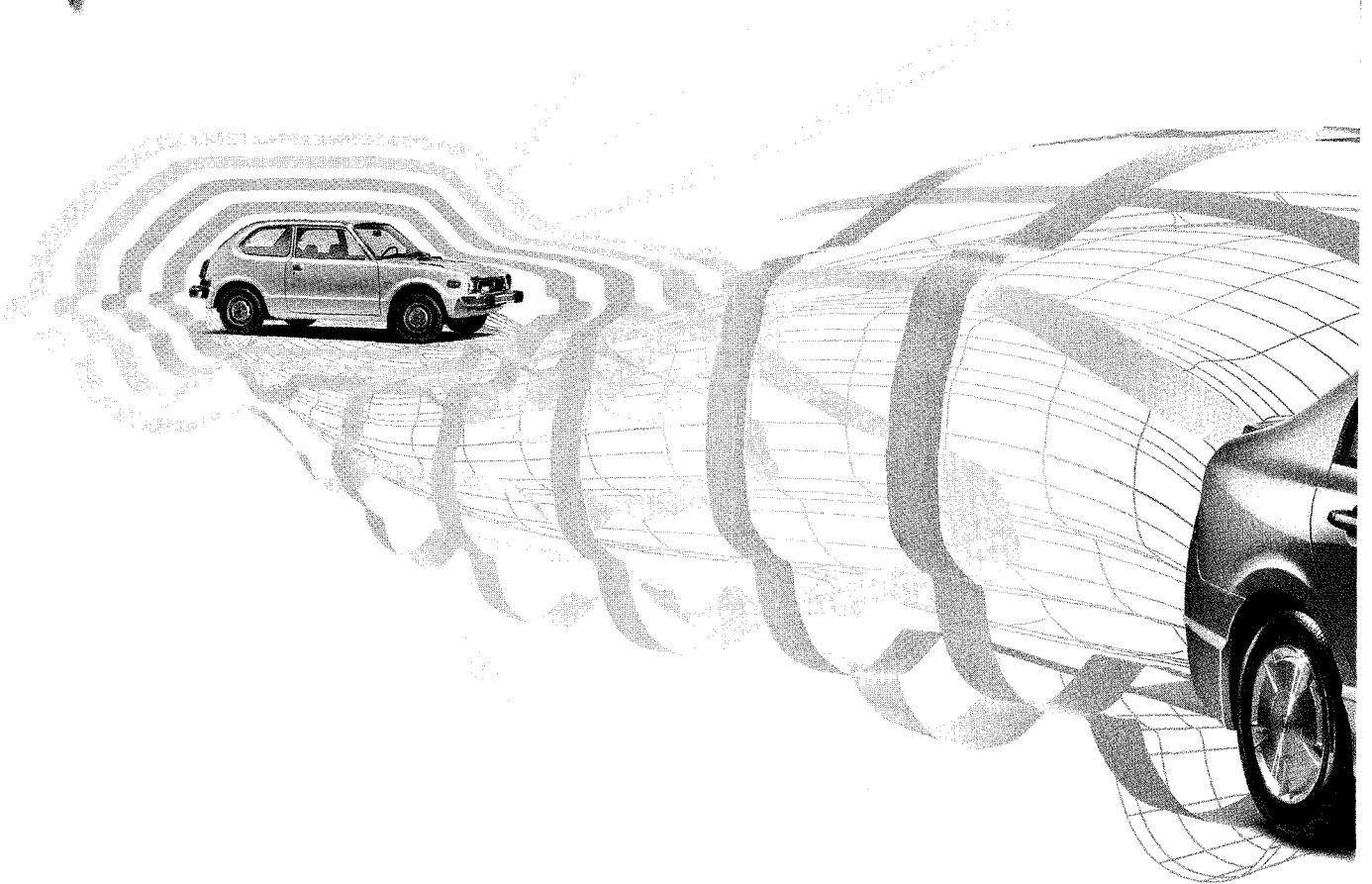
ILLUSTRATION BY JOE CHAN (CHINA)





Environment

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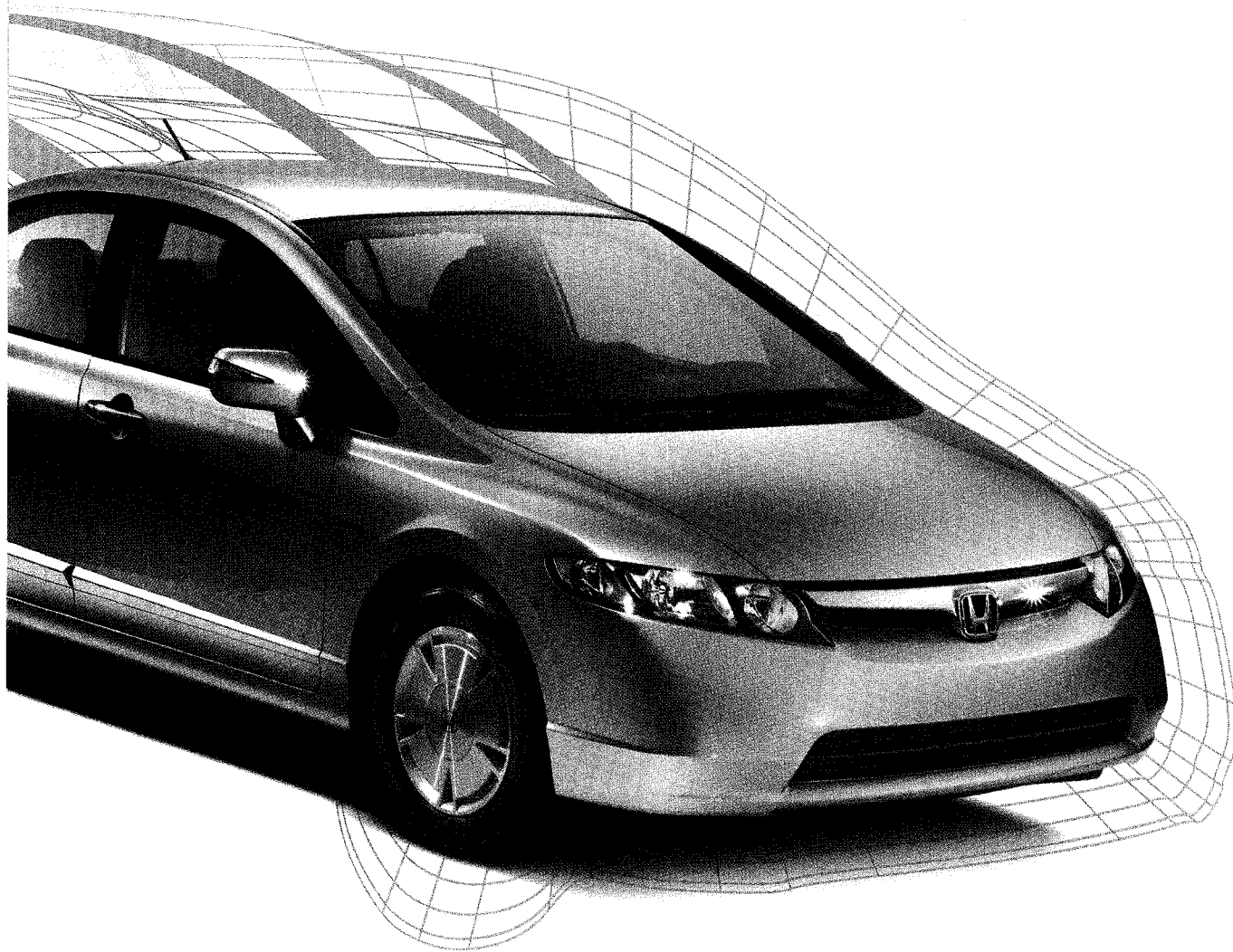


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The Height of Inequality

America's productivity gains have gone to giant salaries for just a few

BY CLIVE CROOK

In 1971, Jan Pen, a Dutch economist, published a celebrated treatise with a less-than-gripping title: *Income Distribution*. The book summoned a memorable image. This is how to think of the pattern of incomes in an economy, Pen said (he was writing about Britain, but bear with me). Suppose that every person in the economy walks by, as if in a parade. Imagine that the parade takes exactly an hour to pass, and that the marchers are arranged in order of income, with the lowest incomes at the front and the highest at the back. Also imagine that the heights of the people in the parade are proportional to what they make: those earning the average income will be of average height, those earning twice the average income will be twice the average height, and so on. We spectators, let us imagine, are also of average height.

Pen then described what the observers would see. Not a series of people of steadily increasing height—that's far too bland a picture. The observers would see something much stranger. They would see, mostly, a parade of dwarves, and then some unbelievable giants at the very end.

As the parade begins, Pen explained, the marchers cannot be seen at all. They are walking upside down, with their heads underground—owners of loss-making businesses, most likely. Very soon, upright marchers begin to pass by, but they are tiny. For five minutes or so, the observers are peering down at people just inches high—old people and youngsters, mainly; people without regular work, who make a little from odd jobs. Ten minutes in, the full-time labor force has arrived: to begin with, mainly unskilled manual and clerical workers, burger flippers, shop assistants, and the like, standing about waist-high to the observers. And at this point things start to get dull,

because there are so very many of these very small people. The minutes pass, and pass, and they keep on coming.

By about halfway through the parade, Pen wrote, the observers might expect to be looking people in the eye—people of average height ought to be in the middle. But no, the marchers are still quite small, these experienced tradespeople, skilled industrial workers, trained office staff, and so on—not yet five feet tall, many of them. On and on they come.

It takes about forty-five minutes—the parade is drawing to a close—before the marchers are as tall as the observers. Heights are visibly rising by this point, but even now not very fast. In the final six minutes, however, when people with earnings in the top 10 percent begin to arrive, things get weird again. Heights begin to surge upward at a madly accelerating rate. Doctors, lawyers, and senior civil servants twenty feet tall speed by. Moments later, successful corporate executives, bankers, stockbrokers—peering down from fifty feet, 100 feet, 500 feet. In the last few seconds you glimpse pop stars, movie stars, the most successful entrepreneurs. You can see only up to their knees (this is Britain: it's cloudy). And if you blink, you'll miss them altogether. At the very end of the parade (it's 1971, recall) is John Paul Getty, heir to the Getty Oil fortune. The sole of his shoe is hundreds of feet thick.

As Garrison Keillor ironically informs his listeners, not every child can be above average. But when it comes to incomes, the great majority can very easily be below average. A comparative handful of exceptionally well-paid people pulls the average up. As a matter of arithmetic, the median income—the income of the worker halfway up the income distribution—is bound to be less than average.

This is true in every economy, but in some more than others. Back when Pen

wrote his book, incomes were already more skewed in America than in Britain. Over the past thirty-five years, and especially over the past ten, that top-end skewness has greatly increased. The weirdness of the last half minute of today's American parade—even more so the weirdness of the last few seconds, and above all the weirdness of the last fraction of a second—is vastly greater than that of the vision, bizarre as it was, described by Pen.

Lately economists have been using new data to look more closely within the top decile of American incomes. What they've found is startling. Here are some results from Ian Dew-Becker and Robert Gordon of Northwestern University. Between 1966 and 2001, median wage and salary income increased by just 11 percent, after inflation. Income at the 90th percentile (six minutes from the end of the hour-long parade) increased nearly six times as much—by 58 percent. At the 99th percentile (the last thirty-six seconds), the rise was 121 percent. At the 99.9th percentile (3.6 seconds before the end), it was 236 percent. And at the 99.99th percentile (0.36 seconds, representing the 13,000 highest-paid workers in the American economy), the rise was 617 percent.

That is worth repeating: Over thirty-five years, the rise in wages and salaries in the wide middle of the income distribution was 11 percent. The rise in wages and salaries at the top of the income distribution was 617 percent.

This is (pretax) wage and salary income, not investment income. Many commentators attribute rising American inequality to growth in profits at the expense of salaries and wages. That's wrong: labor's share of national income does not seem to be trending up or down. What has changed is how much of labor's share goes to top earners. Since the mid-1970s, and especially since the mid-1990s, the dramatic rise in the share of national income earned by the very rich is due not to the strength of their investment portfolios but to their growing share of labor income.

7"

10th percentile

2'6"

35th percentile

Productivity growth has always been seen as perhaps the single most important indicator of rising, broad-based prosperity. But remarkable growth in top-end pay, together with the relative constancy of labor's overall share of income, has an obvious implication: the highest earners are now capturing most of the gain in national income caused by economy-wide productivity growth.

This is quite disturbing. Historically, rising productivity has been a tide that lifted nearly all boats. For more than twenty years during the long surge of productivity growth that followed the Second World War, median incomes in the United States rose as quickly as the highest incomes. This came to be regarded as normal—and, seen from a global vantage point, it still is. The dispersed benefits of high aggregate productivity are the reason why jobs of almost every kind pay better in rich countries than in poor ones.

Mechanics and hairdressers are paid far more in America than in Mexico, even though their individual productivity may not be that different in the two places; north of the border, workers share in the economy's higher overall productivity. A lot depends on whether this continues to be true. It is the very point that the new findings call into question.

The study by Dew-Becker and Gordon asks, "Where Did the Productivity Growth Go?" Over the past thirty-five years, that growth did not lift most boats, or even very many boats. Between 1966 and 2001, only 10 percent of American workers saw their incomes rise at least as fast as economy-wide productivity did. More astonishing still, according to the study's authors, from 1997 to 2001, the top 1 percent captured far more of the real national gain in wage and salary income than did the bottom 50 percent. And even within that highest percentile, the gains were heavily concentrated at the top.

Such extreme skewness is new. It suggests that a huge proportion of the economy's productivity gains are neither being passed on to consumers through lower prices—which would have the effect of raising real incomes very broadly—nor being distributed to investors as profit, nor even being used to raise the wages of most employees in industries seeing rapid productivity growth. Rather, they're being diverted to a comparative handful of employees.

Why is this happening? Nobody is sure, but Dew-Becker and Gordon suggest a combination of two things: for one small group, sports and media celebrities, income growth has come from a perfecting of the labor market; for a different group, top corporate executives, it has come from a breaking down (or even an overthrowing) of the market. Those two segments account for most of the 13,000 people in the 99.99th percentile—with total earnings of \$83 billion in 2001.

A classic 1981 study by the late economist Sherwin Rosen worked out "The Economics of Superstars" and anticipated part of what has happened. The demand for stars in the sports and entertainment industries is such that small differences in talent cause disproportionate gaps in earnings. As technology puts stars in front of bigger audiences, their incomes multiply. Rosen could not have foreseen the media innovations of the past decade, but they have plainly given stars access to far more fans.

I find it interesting that there is no popular unease over the stupendous sums paid to Tiger Woods, or Eminem, or Tom Cruise. And, you might ask, why should there be? They are worth the price of the ticket, at least in the view of their audiences. If they are in demand worldwide, good luck

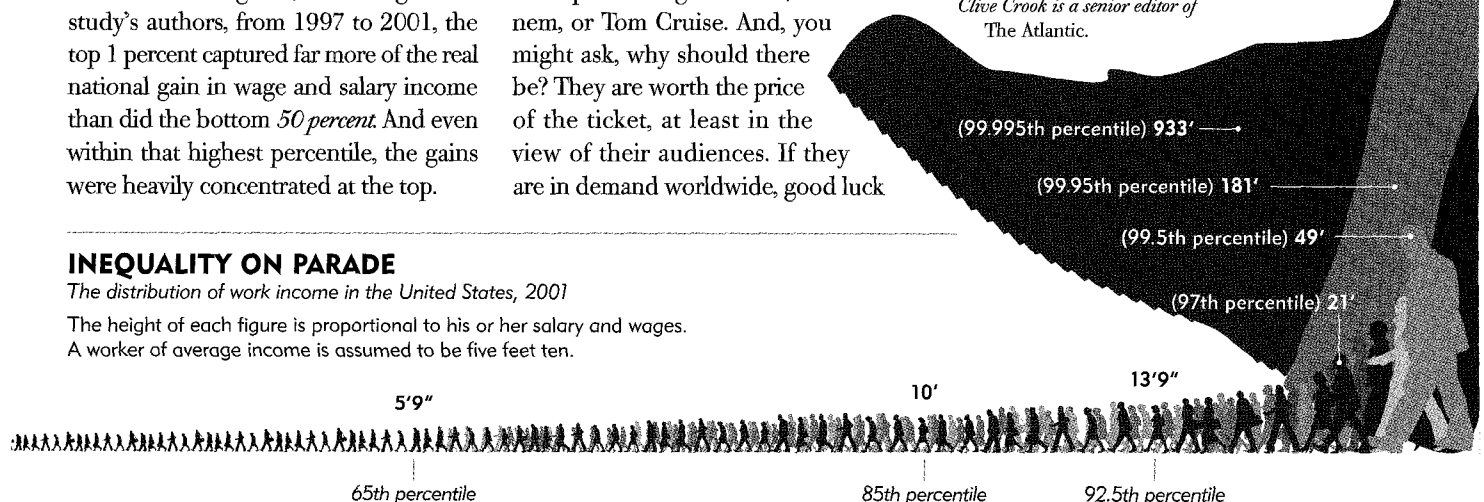
to them. An economist would say the market is working.

The case of fat-cat chief executives arouses different feelings—as it should. In most cases, there is no audience-multiplication factor to account for the dramatic rise in CEO pay. If a Rosen-type process were at work, you would not expect to find that CEO pay had surged only in the United States (and to a lesser extent in Britain). Numerous widely reported cases of pay for no performance are also awkward to explain. When boards give big noncontractual severance packages to bosses fired for incompetence, you have to ask whether this second stratospheric zone of the labor market, unlike the superstar zone, is working properly.

Corporate-governance reforms that would help shareholders keep CEOs in check might do some good. If I'm skeptical, it's partly because shareholders already have some (admittedly limited) powers, and they usually let things slide. That might change if CEO pay continues to rise. At some point, the subdued "outrage constraint" that some corporate-governance activists wish to revive might kick in again. That would be a good thing.

Perhaps the CEOs' appetites can be curbed. Maybe the superstars will find that their audiences cannot widen without limit. And perhaps, if both those things happen, productivity growth will again raise incomes broadly, as it once did, and as it is supposed to. If not, how much longer before the dwarves get restless? ▀

Clive Crook is a senior editor of The Atlantic.



BRIEF LIVES

The Reverend

Rudolph Giuliani learns to speak "evangelese"—and tests the waters for a presidential bid

BY HANNA ROSIN

Fireworks shoot up from the stage. A trapdoor in the ceiling opens, and red, white, and blue confetti showers the stadium. "He will always be known as a great American hero," says the announcer, and the crowd of 18,000 begins to chant—"Ru-dy! Ru-dy! Ru-dy!"—as he sprints onto the platform.

If this were the 2008 Republican National Convention, Rudolph Giuliani would be in heaven. Sadly, it's not even close. This is the "Get Motivated" business seminar in downtown Des Moines, featuring a motley assortment of speakers doing extended infomercials on the secrets of success. There's Steve Forbes on the stock market, George Foreman on his boxing (and grilling) career, and Rudy on "Leadership," the title of his recent book.

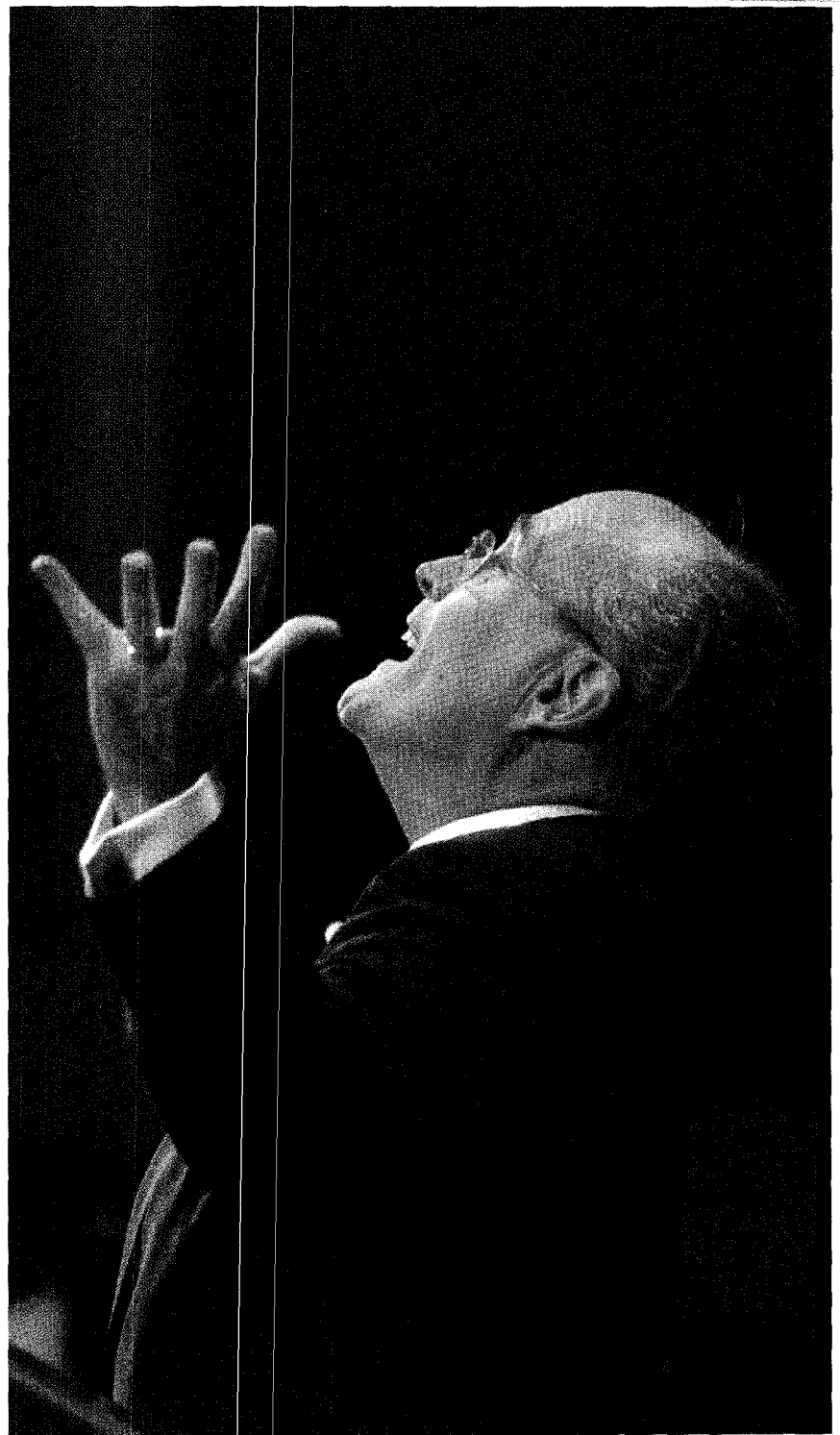
He arrived in Iowa the night before to speak at a couple of fund-raisers and feel out the local hierarchy, to see "whether it makes sense to run for president in 2008." (Iowa holds the first presidential caucus, and the hopefuls line up there years in advance.) There are ample reasons why it may *not* make sense. Giuliani, after all, is not a man who naturally channels heartland values. He loses his temper publicly, calling people "jerks" and worse; he's lived most of his life in New York; he's twice divorced. And that's before we get into the actual issues (he's pro-choice and pro-gay rights, which alienates him from Iowa's many social conservatives).

The national reporters on early campaign duty took the time to follow Giuliani around the state, though they seemed dubious about his prospects: Don't you think you're out of step with the GOP mainstream? Is being a New Yorker a handicap? Is the party's tent big enough to include you? I saw none of them at the "Get Motivated" seminar, a nonpolitical event sandwiched

between political fund-raisers. If they had peeked in, they would probably have been slightly embarrassed by the perky up-speak coming through the boom mic: "Good morning! Welcome to the 'Get Motivated' seminar! It's going to be an outstanding day that will change the rest of your life!" But if they had gotten past the kitsch and hyperbole, they might have seen how Giuliani can possibly fix his glaring flaws as a candidate—and witnessed perhaps his best hope for connecting to a con-

servative base with which he has little in common.

It's not the first time Giuliani has been the keynote speaker for a "Get Motivated" audience: he's been doing this, in different cities, nearly every three weeks for about the last three years. Standing there on the stage in Des Moines, surrounded by patriotic symbols and enough screaming midwesterners to fill a small town, the former mayor of New York seems like a guy who just might be presidential material.



AP PHOTO/PHILAN M. EBENHACK

Americans expect their president to talk like them, especially when it comes to matters of faith. This has little to do with actually going to church; it's about the delicate art of mastering what speechwriters sometimes call "evangelese." About 13 percent of the population constitutes what we think of as the hard-core Christian religious right; beyond them are a vaster number of what could be called "values voters." Values voters are generally Republican and less rigid on the usual cultural issues—they might accept gay civil unions, for instance, or abortion under certain circumstances. They don't shout their demands from the steps of the Supreme Court, nor do they much want them shouted. When they evaluate political leaders, they're often looking for different, more subtle cues. They might want to know that a candidate's faith was deepened by a personal experience, that his or her life can be summed up as a story of struggle, redemption, and growth. Or they might just tap into a candidate's general sense of optimism and contentment—a belief, rooted in Genesis and coloring all of life, that things happen for a reason. "Creationism Lite," you might call it—an affirmational creed that carries its own emotional and intellectual style of thinking and speaking.

Candidates woo values voters with varying degrees of success. George W. Bush reached them by telling the story of his recovery from a dissolute youth—how he was a fallen man, drinking and wasting his time, until Billy Graham set him straight. Hillary Clinton has so far expressed herself crudely, saying, for instance, that an immigration bill would criminalize "Jesus himself."

Giuliani's steadiness after 9/11 endeared him to most Americans, and at that time he called upon his faith—he's a lifelong Catholic—at the appropriate moments: when he walked among the ruins of the Twin Towers, for instance, he famously said to each worker, "God bless you." But in calmer times he has had a way of undercutting himself. He opens his book by thanking God for directing him to begin thinking and writing about leadership just before 9/11,

when he would need it most. But in the next few paragraphs he gives the advice "Don't assume a damn thing," and then offhandedly mentions his marriage falling apart. At one point he tells a story about how, as a lawyer in 1992, he saw smoke coming from a historic church and rushed in to save a priest. He then saw some thieves taking a candelabrum off the altar and yelled, "Put that fucking stuff down!" This is Rudy on Rudy, so we commend him—even admire him—for his honesty. And if all America were made up of reporters and New Yorkers, such foul-mouthed candor—"anti-evangelese," one might call it—would serve him well. But alas, much of the rest of the country is not so fond of jaded, thuggish, neurotic New Yorkers, particularly not as presidential candidates.

Now put Giuliani in an entirely different context. Inside the Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines, the mood is like a tent revival, with a particular focus on the prosperity gospel. Speakers of greater and lesser fame tell their stories of success and urge the crowd of mid-level managers and salespeople to: Go the extra mile! Have all you want! Double your savings in six months! The speeches run the gamut from the practical (investment advice) to the purely inspirational. They are patriotic and, in a majority of cases, deeply religious. Foreman's speech crescendos as he recalls the day he found himself in a "deep dark yard," feeling like he was "about to die," when a big hand pulled him up. "I became an evangelist for the Lord Jesus Christ," he says, and the crowd goes wild. Zig Ziglar has been on the circuit for eighteen years and is a marvel to behold, a sweating caged animal of a preacher who takes the crowd back to "Joo-ly the Fourth, 1972, the day I committed my life to Jesus Christ and my entire life changed." Two decades of American motivational jargon flow through him, from folksy slang to self-help to management-speak to megachurch preaching.

Giuliani can't do southern preacher. Yet there's a current of spirituality running through his speech on the subject of 9/11, and how much that day shattered and then changed him. The crowd

THE ODDS

GOP R.I.P.?

Does the Democratic Party have much chance of regaining national governing power in the near future? If you took a casual look at history—or at current polls—you'd say yes in a heartbeat. The opposition has almost always made electoral gains in the sixth year of a presidency. This president is almost as unpopular as Jimmy Carter was at his nadir. And the Republican Party has lately been ridden by scandal. Forget mere victory; a rout might seem in the offing.

But those who wager on political races are not exuding confidence in the Democrats' prospects. Below are the chances of continued Republican control as implied by recent betting on the book-making Web site www.tradesports.com.

54% GOP Holds the House in '06.

Any majority would be hard to roll back given the safety of so many gerrymandered seats and the financial advantages of most incumbents. And the Democrats haven't picked up fifteen seats—what they'd need for a majority—in any election in two decades. But this is the first time in ten years that the Republicans have been stuck playing defense.

81% GOP Holds the Senate in '06.

If you believe the odds for the House are correct, you have to wonder about these: since the election of senators by popular vote began in the early twentieth century, the House has never changed hands without the Senate also flipping. But swinging six seats, with just thirty-three in play, is a tall order. And because senators are usually better known to their constituents than are House representatives, they tend to be less vulnerable to negative perceptions of the party or the president.

48% GOP Holds the Presidency in '08.

The odds of a Democratic victory are listed at 49 percent. (The remaining 3 percent or so reflects the chances of a third-party victory.) The Democrats' penchant for self-sabotage may weigh on the minds of bettors, who are probably asking themselves: Will they really nominate Hillary Clinton?

—CHUCK TODD

has waited eight hours to see him, so he is greeted as the star act. When the roaring dies down, he begins by poking fun at his own reputation for being "controversial," telling a joke that features Pope John Paul II as the hero. Then he masters a trick all good politicians pull off: making his own success—and thus himself—seem accessible to anyone in the audience. "Are leaders born or made?" he asks. And of course he concludes they are made—self-made—by anyone with the will.

His speech continues as a list of "leadership principles" the political culture now considers close cousins to a conservative God-fearing temperament. "You've got to have a set of convictions," he says, and praises Ronald Reagan's belief that the Berlin Wall could not hold. "You have to be an optimist," he says, and encourages the members of the audience to "follow your hopes and dreams." You've got to have "courage,

more meaningful—a great political speech, church, *Oprah*.

He ends on a note of hope, telling a story about one of the New York City firefighters giving a bear hug to President Bush. Giuliani does not mention God except once, in a joke. But his speech is infused with the kind of uplifting message that, these days, shares boundaries with preaching: "You've got to care about people," he says. "In fact, you have to love them."

Peter Lowe started the "Get Motivated" seminars twenty-five years ago, and he prides himself on his talent scouting. He's featured plenty of famous people—Mikhail Gorbachev, Colin Powell, Norman Schwarzkopf, Bill Clinton—but he says Giuliani is one of the best. "You can see from the audience how he connects," says Lowe. "He has a special gift." Lowe has never polled his audience members on their politics, but

that resonate with millions of people that the rest of us may not even notice. Some of our folks think they can quote some scripture they found on the Internet and reach these people. But there are some really seasoned professionals out there. Giuliani wants to be one of them.

And thanks to Lowe, he's well on his way.

Forget about abortion and gay rights for a moment. In the "Get Motivated" world, it doesn't matter what you're selling; it matters who you are, and how you sell. It matters that people believe you, trust in you. Giuliani "is like Reagan, only more results-oriented," says the Republican pollster Frank Luntz. "And people are willing to vote for people they don't agree with if they see character. They are so desperate for someone to lift their spirits."

In Iowa, Giuliani was up to principle No. 2 ("Follow your hopes and dreams") when he was interrupted. From down in the audience, just beyond the stage, he heard a cell phone ring. He stopped in the middle of telling a story. "It's okay, you can answer your cell phone," he said. "You won't interrupt me." The woman whose phone had rung was mortified; he had just embarrassed her in front of 18,000 people. In the "town hall" meetings he used to conduct as mayor of New York, through a radio show, Giuliani was not known for his good-natured populism. He was known for making fun of constituents who called him with what he thought were petty problems. This is the dark Giuliani, and here he was, making an unwelcome appearance. He shifted to a long digression about the scene in *Dr. Strangelove* where General Buck Turgidson answers a call in the middle of a crisis and whispers sweet nothings to his girl on the phone, as the nation's political and military leadership looks on impatiently. "Just tell him you love him so I can go on with my speech," Giuliani said. No one was laughing. Giuliani actually waited for the woman to hang up. Then, after a painful minute or so, he was back in candidate mode, talking about Vince Lombardi and the mind of a champion. ■

Hanna Rosin, an Atlantic contributing editor, is working on a book about young evangelicals.

Giuliani's speech is infused with the kind of uplifting message that, these days, shares boundaries with preaching: "You've got to care about people," he says. "In fact, you have to love them."

and be able to deal with fear," he says. When he gets to principle No. 4—"Be prepared"—he veers into what could almost pass for a religious testimonial. The morning of September 11, 2001, he says, was the "worst experience of my life ... You prepare for everything you can think of, but you can't prepare for this." He says he stood watching debris fall from the Twin Towers and realized that it was, in fact, people jumping. He was lost, without a plan. Yet somehow he found sources of inspiration and strength. He remembered what he'd always known: the "value of teamwork," the need to "be there when the going gets tough." This is when people in the front rows of the audience begin to take out their cell-phone cameras and snap pictures of him. For a few moments the business seminar has taken on shades of something deeper,

he guesses that most are Republicans; about 80 percent are businesspeople, he says, and a third are in sales. (In Des Moines one of the loudest applause lines was for Steve Forbes, when he called the tax code an "abomination and a beast.") The seminars almost always sell out enormous stadiums; in Des Moines, that means about a tenth of the city's voting population attended.

Giuliani's advisers say these motivational seminars are not part of his campaign strategy. Yet if he does run, Giuliani should thank Lowe for helping him find his voice. Jeff Shesol, a former speechwriter for Bill Clinton who continues to write for other prominent Democrats, told me that George W. Bush's campaigns

have alerted us all to the coded speech where lots of winking goes on to evangelicals, lots of loaded words



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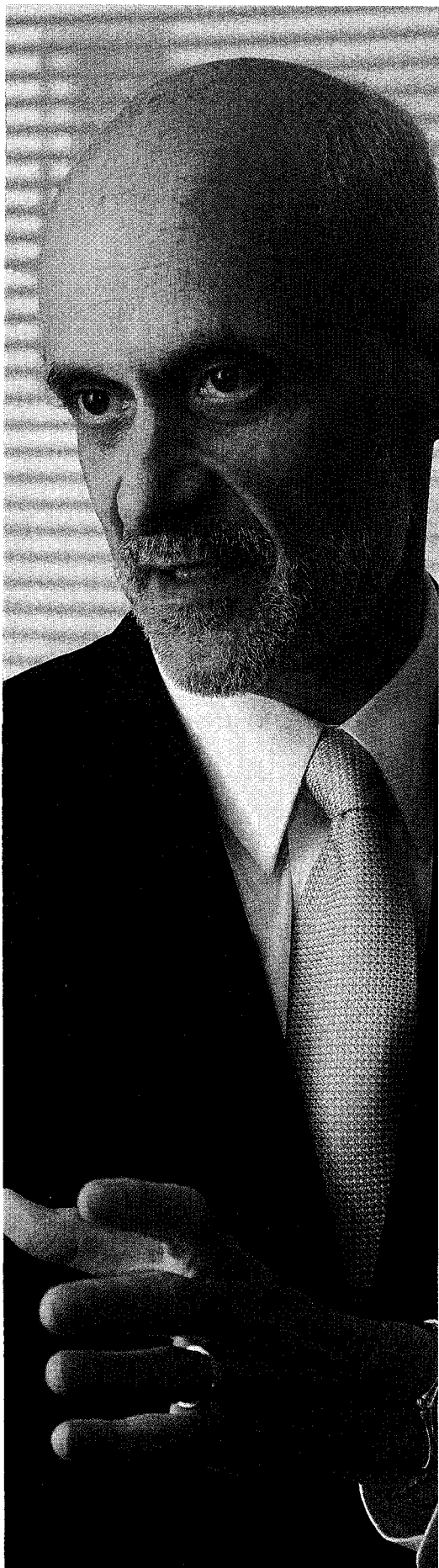


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WASHINGTON

Catastrophe Management

Michael Chertoff tells Atlantic contributor Stuart Taylor Jr. what it's like to run the Department of Homeland Security. An edited transcript

There's a lot of talk in Washington, some by people who admire you personally, that DHS—the Department of Homeland Security—is an organizational disaster, and that no one alive could make it successful. How would you respond?

I think you probably could have said those things about the Department of Defense back in the 1950s. I mean, if you look at the history of the Department of Defense, they spent about thirty years, before Goldwater-Nichols [a 1986 law reorganizing the military services and clarifying the chain of command], with the services fighting among each other, and every service trying to duplicate the effort of every other service. If memory serves me, it was the Iran hostage effort—the failed Iran hostage-rescue effort [of 1980]—that ultimately catalyzed the final reconfiguration of the DOD to make it into what I think most people would acknowledge is a well-functioning organization.

Whether or not people think it was correct to create DHS in the first place, we have it. The absolute worst outcome would be to pull it apart and say, “Now let's reconfigure it again, either as several new organizations or as parts of preexisting organizations.” At some point, this constant reorganizational churn distracts us from what is really necessary.

Let me push you on that. Before, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, reported directly to the president. When the head of FEMA needed authority to do something, he'd go straight to the White House. Now he needs to come to you—or at least he should—and then you need to go to the White House. There are just more layers.

[There's a] great myth that things were better in the 1990s. The fact of

the matter is, we didn't have a Katrina in the '90s, and for all those who say, “Well, you know, FEMA failed as part of DHS because of what happened in Katrina,” I'd have to say, “Where was the plan for the evacuation of New Orleans that was written in the 1990s?” I've never seen that plan.

As far as I'm aware, the first effort at doing a real plan for the evacuation was done starting in 2003, when DHS absorbed FEMA. And although the plan was far from perfect, I think even people in New Orleans admit that it actually helped them do that initial evacuation of the city when Katrina first approached. And I think it's as unfair to compare the performance of FEMA last year with ten years ago as it would be to say that because someone played great minor-league ball and then struggled in his first World Series, somehow it means that his minor-league manager was better than his big-league manager.

You took this job to fight terrorism, not hurricanes. When Katrina hit, did you feel blindsided—like nature had played a joke on you?

[Almost] every time I've taken a job in the government, what I thought would be the challenge has turned out not to be the real challenge. But Katrina has been a lesson not only in how to react to a natural disaster, but also in how to react to a man-made disaster. What we've learned about emergency operations and evacuation out of Katrina is going to yield dividends across the board in terms of preparedness for terror. Likewise, avian flu, which would be a natural disaster, is teaching us things about how to react to a biological incident that would be very relevant if someone were to attack us using biological means. There's real cross-fertilization here, which is one of the reasons why running the department

RICHARD A. BLOOM/NATIONAL JOURNAL



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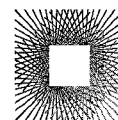
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as a unified whole actually winds up adding to our security level.

Could anyone else in this job have handled Katrina better than you did?

Everybody brings unique strengths, weaknesses, and personality characteristics to a job. I can't judge for myself whether someone else has a different mix that would have worked better or worse. What I can tell you is that everybody in the top leadership of the department, including myself, now has completed perhaps the most in-depth crash course in catastrophe management—not disaster management, but catastrophe management—of anybody in the country. We've been through an extraordinary experience and have gained some real learning from that.

You inherited many politically appointed senior managers with little expertise for their jobs. The famous "Brownie," Michael Brown at FEMA, is everybody's favorite example. Why didn't you say, "Mr. President, I'd be honored to take this position, but only if I can hire and fire my own senior staff"?

The people I've hired have all been people I selected and wanted. I guess legend has it that I've been saddled with people I didn't want. Now, obviously I inherited people, and it took a little bit of time to achieve a turnover. Some people I would have liked to keep, some people I frankly wasn't sorry to see go. One of the challenges for me coming in, though, was not to completely vacate the place and then have to go through what is a very time-consuming process to repopulate. And that's why, maybe in a couple of cases, there were people who stayed on who had a confusion of loyalties.

Do you want to elaborate on that?

Well, I mean, in Mike Brown's testimony [to a Senate committee in February], he basically acknowledged that he was deliberately insubordinate. Obviously, had he been candid with me at the time that he just wasn't capable of functioning under my leadership, I would have said, "Mike, I respect that and understand it, and have a nice life."

Let me make sure I've got what you mean by "deliberately insubordinate." I think he testified that he basically went around you and didn't keep you informed because he'd rather just deal straight with the White House, and he thought he could get more done that way.

Well, I think he got less done, because the White House is not, and should not be, an operational organization that is going to order the Coast Guard helicopters to move from Point A to Point B. If Michael Brown felt he needed something, and that he couldn't do it on his own, and frankly I delegated to him virtually all the authority that I had—

You've taken some grief for that, haven't you?

Well, I have to say, in retrospect, knowing what I know now, I wish I hadn't done that. The one thing I will say is this: I replaced him quickly. By the end of that first week, I had put [Coast Guard Vice] Admiral [Thad] Allen in place to run the operation in New Orleans. Now, had I known at the time what I later learned was in his mind, I would have put Admiral Allen in a week earlier. I can't replay that event, although I can wish I had known what was in his mind at the time rather than when he testified six months later.

The fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks is coming up. Are we much better prepared to prevent or respond to another attack on that scale now than then?

Yes. We've got locked cockpit doors, much better airline security. Our port security is much better. We've got much better intelligence sharing than we had before. Our response capabilities are better. So we've dramatically elevated our defenses, and the proof of the pudding, to some extent, is the fact that we haven't had a successful attack here since then. But that's not to be complacent. As the arrests of would-be terrorists in Canada in early June make clear, you can get *homegrown* foreign-inspired terrorist groups. So we have to make sure not only that we're continuing

to build up our defenses against a traditional al-Qaeda attack, but also that we're looking at how terrorism is morphing. We have to look at the onset of virtual terrorism—virtual jihad—where groups radicalize themselves over the Internet, train themselves over the Internet [without ever traveling to foreign training camps], and then go out and commit acts of terror.

What are your proudest accomplishments at this stage of the job?

The thing that I thought was most important, and I hope I have achieved to some extent, is an honest and straightforward conversation with the American people that says there's always going to be risk and that, if we really wanted to eliminate risks, we would have to [create] a society so autocratic and encumbered by security that we would have neither our liberty nor our prosperity.

We've got to find a place in the world of homeland security that does allow us to have a free society and does allow us to have prosperity and doesn't just smother us with security. But that means that we have to be honest about the fact that we will be accepting some level of risk if we do that. The extent to which we've incorporated that philosophy into Homeland Security is the thing I'm proudest of.

Are you glad you took the job? Is it fun?

"Fun" is not the right word. I mean, in some ways it is enormously gratifying. I work with some tremendous people, and I think we've actually accomplished a lot in the last year in reconfiguring the department. But there are times when it's frustrating, and it's difficult for anybody, I think, to be happy when you get criticism that's unfair. Sometimes it's just difficult to move a large organization quickly. I'd like to see things get done yesterday that sometimes take weeks and even months because the process has a lot of stakeholders and legal requirements, and it just takes time. ■

Stuart Taylor Jr. is a National Journal columnist and a Newsweek contributor.

The full text of this interview may be found at www.theatlantic.com/chertoff.

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Who's frittering one away?
Who's on the front page?
Who's on the front lines?
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POLL

NUCLEAR IRAN

The Atlantic recently asked a group of foreign-policy authorities about Iran's nuclear quest

Q: Do you believe there is any set of incentives and economic sanctions that could persuade Iran to give up its quest for nuclear weapons?

63% Yes

37% No

"Yes. Iran is likely to insist on keeping a 'research' program that preserves a small-scale, low-grade enrichment capability. But the right package can forestall Tehran's quest for nuclear weapons."

"A grand bargain with the United States might persuade Tehran to stop just short of building the bomb. But neither [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad nor the mullahs will sign any deal that requires Iran to shut down its nuclear program. And any grand bargain will require Washington to recognize Tehran as a major regional player."

"Give up? No. Postpone or delay? Yes. A few countries, [having] once embarked on the quest for nuclear weapons, have indeed decided to abandon that quest when they concluded it was not in their interests. These include Sweden, South Africa, and Libya. Others have decided that circumstances made it [desirable] to postpone an effort, but not to forsake it forever. These countries—Japan, Brazil, and a few others—have kept the option available, usually under the guise of a peaceful nuclear-power program. Iran, at best, can be moved to this second category of states."

"No. I don't believe the Europeans would make sanctions credible enough to convince the Iranians that there's really an 'or else' out there."

"No. Iran has too much invested in its nuclear program. Even if, like North Korea, it signed an accord, it would violate it."

Q: If Iran were to build nuclear weapons, do you think it would likely do any of the following:

A. Support terrorism more aggressively, from behind a nuclear shield, with the goal of further spreading the Islamic revolution?

58% Yes

42% No

"Yes. However, Iran's goals would range from reducing U.S. influence to engaging in a strategic rivalry with Saudi Arabia. Spreading the revolution would be one goal of many, and not the most important one."

"No. The Islamic revolution is pretty much played out, and you don't spread revolution through the barrel of a (nuclear) gun. It doesn't work. And opponents can use countertechniques that stay below the level at which an Iranian bomb could rationally be employed."

B. Seek to drive up oil prices by bullying other OPEC members, closing the Strait of Hormuz, or taking other actions for its economic gain?

65% No

35% Yes

"Doubtful. Iran has to live in the same world with the other oil producers, it has an interest in a stable marketplace (at a high price for oil, of course), and a bomb will not protect it from economic and other countermeasures."

"Yes, of course. Simply posturing about nuclear weapons is a big economic gain for Iran because it drives up oil prices."

C. Use its nuclear weapons offensively, either by directly attacking other countries or by passing the weapons to terrorist groups?

86% No

14% Yes

"No. Iran can be deterred by the certain knowledge of devastating retaliation."

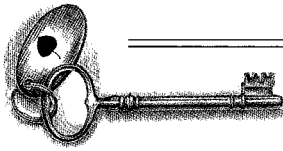
"No. Iran has had chemical weapons for twenty years now and has not passed them to terrorists—upping the stakes and passing a nuclear weapon would be highly unlikely."

"Most analysts will say that history shows possession of nuclear weapons makes states more risk-averse and interested in stability. A classic case is the loss of revolutionary zeal in China after it crossed the [nuclear] threshold. But the real question is whether Iran is like all other states or whether it believes that it has a divine mission, the accomplishment of which might well require massive destruction—even its own. The awful truth is that no one knows the answer to this question. We do not know because there is [an ideological] battle that is ongoing in Iran itself, and the answer belongs to the unknown future, not to the hidden, secret present."

PARTICIPANTS (38): Kenneth Adelman, Graham Allison, Ronald Asmus, Samuel Berger, Max Boot, Stephen Bosworth, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Daniel Byman, Richard Clarke, Eliot Cohen, Ivo Daalder, James Dobbins, Lawrence Eagleburger, Douglas Feith, John Gaddis, Robert Gallucci, Leslie Gelb, Marc Grossman, John Hamre, Gary Hart, Bruce Hoffman, Robert Hunter, Tony Judt, Robert Kagan, David Kay, Andrew Krepinovich, Charles Kupchan, John Lehman, James Lindsay, William Nash, Joseph Nye, Carlos Pascual, Thomas Pickering, Kenneth Pollack, Joseph Ralston, Susan Rice, Wendy Sherman, James Steinberg.

Not all participants answered every question.

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Primary Sources

*Muslim public opinion the world over;
the disappearing middle-class neighborhood;
the specter of the sexual "superpeer"*

SOCIETY

The Middle Class Once Happened Here

As the gap between America's rich and poor widens, the number of urban middle-class neighborhoods has steeply declined, a new Brookings Institution paper points out. In 1970, 58 percent of metropolitan neighborhoods enjoyed a middle-class median income; in 2000, just 41 percent of urban neighborhoods were middle class. (Similar trends hold true in the suburbs, the report notes.) There are still many middle-class urbanites—22 percent of city dwellers, down from 28 percent in 1970—but the neighborhoods they are living in are

increasingly quasi-ghettos or gold coasts. The report warns that as economic diversity diminishes and neighborhoods divide further into rich and poor, cities will have a harder time distributing public services equitably and attracting private investment into places that aren't already hyper-gentrified. As for where you should move if you're looking for a socioeconomic melting pot, the data suggest Seattle, or Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, both of which are among the ten cities with the most middle-class neighborhoods. The two cities most stratified by class, meanwhile, are New York City and Los Angeles—which should come

as no surprise to anyone who has taken the subway from the Bronx to the Upper East Side, or driven from Santa Monica to South Central.

—"Where Did They Go?"

The Decline of Middle-Income Neighborhoods in Metropolitan America," Jason Booza, Jackie Cutsinger, and George Galster, Brookings Institution

MEDIA

The (Sexual) Revolution Will Be Televised

The FCC crackdown in the aftermath of Janet Jackson's nipple slip may not have been entirely misguided. A new study finds that exposure to sexuality in the media can, in fact, make teenagers more likely to have sex at an early age. Researchers surveyed 1,017 teens in fourteen North Carolina middle schools, interviewing students between the ages of twelve and fourteen about their media-consumption habits and their sexual activities (or

lack thereof). The researchers then performed what must have been a fairly stimulating "content analysis" of the 264 television shows, magazines, songs, and movies that were mentioned by more than 10 percent of the students, quantifying the portrayals and discussions of "pubertal development, romantic relationships, body exposure or nudity, sexual innuendo, touching and kissing and sexual intercourse." Using these data, and controlling for a variety of factors, the study found that the students between the ages of twelve and fourteen who enjoyed the largest "Sexual Media Diet" (SMD) were the most likely to engage in sexual activity within the next two years—but only if they were white. Among black teens, there was no correlation between SMD and sexual activity, even though black teens tended to be more sexually experienced, and to spend more time consuming media, than their white peers. The authors note that teens

tend to base their sexual behavior on perceptions of their peers' activity, and suggest that a hypersexualized media may function as "a kind of sexual superpeer that encourages them to be sexually active." For black teenagers, however, they speculate that the power of "real peer groups that promote early and frequent sexual activity"—particularly the cultural pressure on "urban black males who are encouraged to achieve status by having as many sexual partners as possible"—may be stronger than it is for white teens.

—"Sexy Media Matter: Exposure to Sexual Content in Music, Movies, Television, and Magazines Predicts Black and White Adolescents' Sexual Behavior," Jane D. Brown et al., *Pediatrics*

For links to the documents discussed in these pages visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200609/primarysources.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mixed Signals

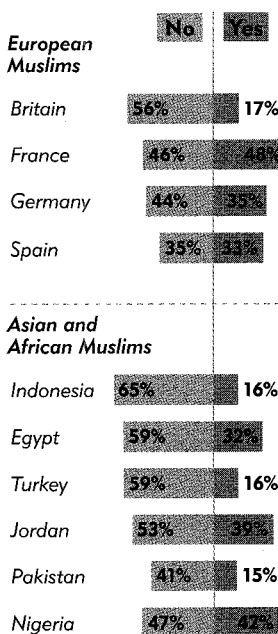
Whether you think that Europe is assimilating its Muslim minorities just fine, thank you, or being swamped by a radical Islamic tide, a new Pew survey of Muslim opinion will bolster your argument. The report finds that overall, Europe's Muslim minorities are more moderate than their coreligionists in Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Jordan: they are more likely to describe Westerners as "respectful of women," "generous," and "honest," and less likely to call them "selfish" or "arrogant" or "violent"—and they are marginally less likely to find a conflict between modernity and Islam. Muslims in the West are also more favorably disposed to their Jewish neighbors—particularly in France, where 71 percent

of Muslims have a favorable impression of Jews. But the picture isn't all positive. Muslims in Britain, France, and Germany are just as likely as the inhabitants of Muslim-majority nations to describe relations between Muslims and Westerners as "generally bad." Support for suicide bombing in defense of Islam is marginally lower among Muslims living in the West than elsewhere, but even so, 35 percent of French Muslims and a quarter of Spanish and British Muslims would countenance it under some circumstances. And while European Muslims are more likely than Muslims elsewhere to admit that Arabs carried out the 9/11 attacks, pluralities in Britain, Germany, and Spain still insist that someone else took down the Twin Towers.

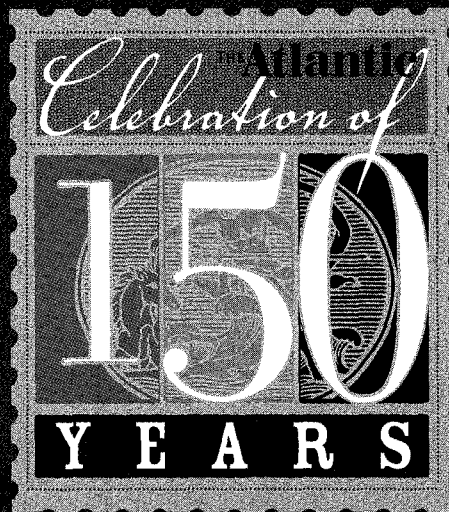
—"The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other," Pew Research Center

EAST AND WEST

A recent Pew study asked Muslims in European, Asian, and African countries, "Did Arabs carry out the 9/11 attacks?"



THE Atlantic IDEAS



September 15–16

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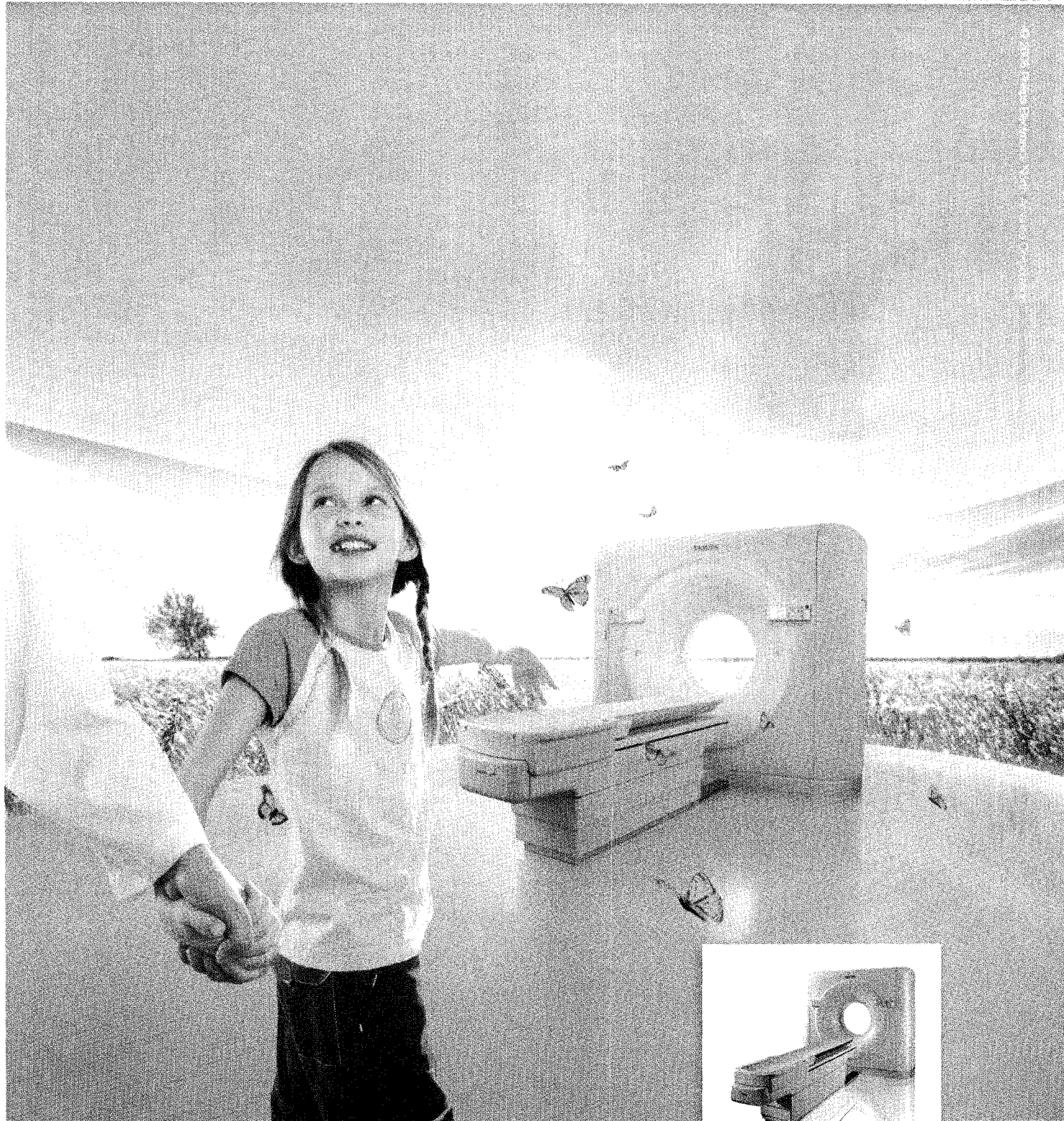
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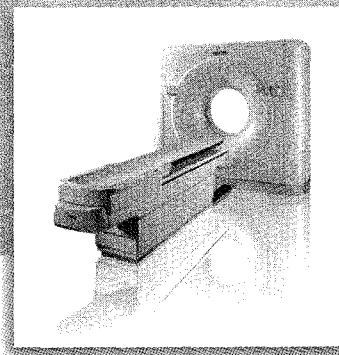
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Technology & Innovation

This is the eighth in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary. This installment is introduced by James Fallows, a national correspondent of The Atlantic.



HISTORY IS DRIVEN BY ideas and passions, and by unforeseeable events. The modern world might be very different if the German generals' attempt to kill Adolf Hitler had succeeded, or if Lee Harvey Oswald's attempt to kill John F. Kennedy had failed.

History is also driven by science and technology. Science is at the center of many of today's political arguments—about climate change, evolution, definitions of the beginning and end of life. The technologies of economic growth (cars, factories, power plants) and of weapons production have created problems that other technologies (of conservation and miniaturization and communication) will presumably help solve.

The Atlantic was founded largely as an anti-slavery journal at a moment when technology was about to seriously affect the course of that debate. (Against the productive might of the industrialized North, the states of the slaveholding South stood very little chance in drawn-out warfare.) Ever since that time, even though its emphasis has been on public affairs and the arts, *The Atlantic* has consistently noted—with excitement, occasional concern, and serious attention—the inventions and discoveries of each age. These eight excerpts show the

attempts of writers, frozen at particular moments in technological time, to imagine how the gizmos and breakthroughs they have just seen will matter in the long run. As a group they illustrate how prescient such assessments can turn out to be—and how silly. The more detailed a writer becomes about the scale and impact of an invention, the greater the potential giggle factor in retrospect. Airplanes that cut the travel time between Vienna and Paris to a mere ten hours! Word processors that spare you the need to hit “return” after you type each line! (The source of that last insight was, um, me, in an article twenty-four years ago. I should probably note at this point that I'm just writing the introduction—I didn't choose the passages.)

But the harder a writer has tried to connect the technology of the moment to the permanent nature of individual and social life, the more prescient the assessment is likely to seem. The most famous of these passages is Vannevar Bush's “As We May Think,” which in 1945, before the first transistor existed, imagined the structure and value of the modern World Wide Web. What Gilbert Seldes wrote in 1937 about television's likely effect on styles of thought, what Oliver Wendell Holmes foresaw in 1859 about how photography would change our view of the physical world, and most of what the other writers predicted stands up well now. And what Mark Twain wrote in 1880 applies to a predicament as fresh and modern as hearing one side of a cell-phone call. —JAMES FALLOWS

For the full text of these articles, visit www.theatlantic.com/ideastour.

THE AGE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

June 1859

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

....

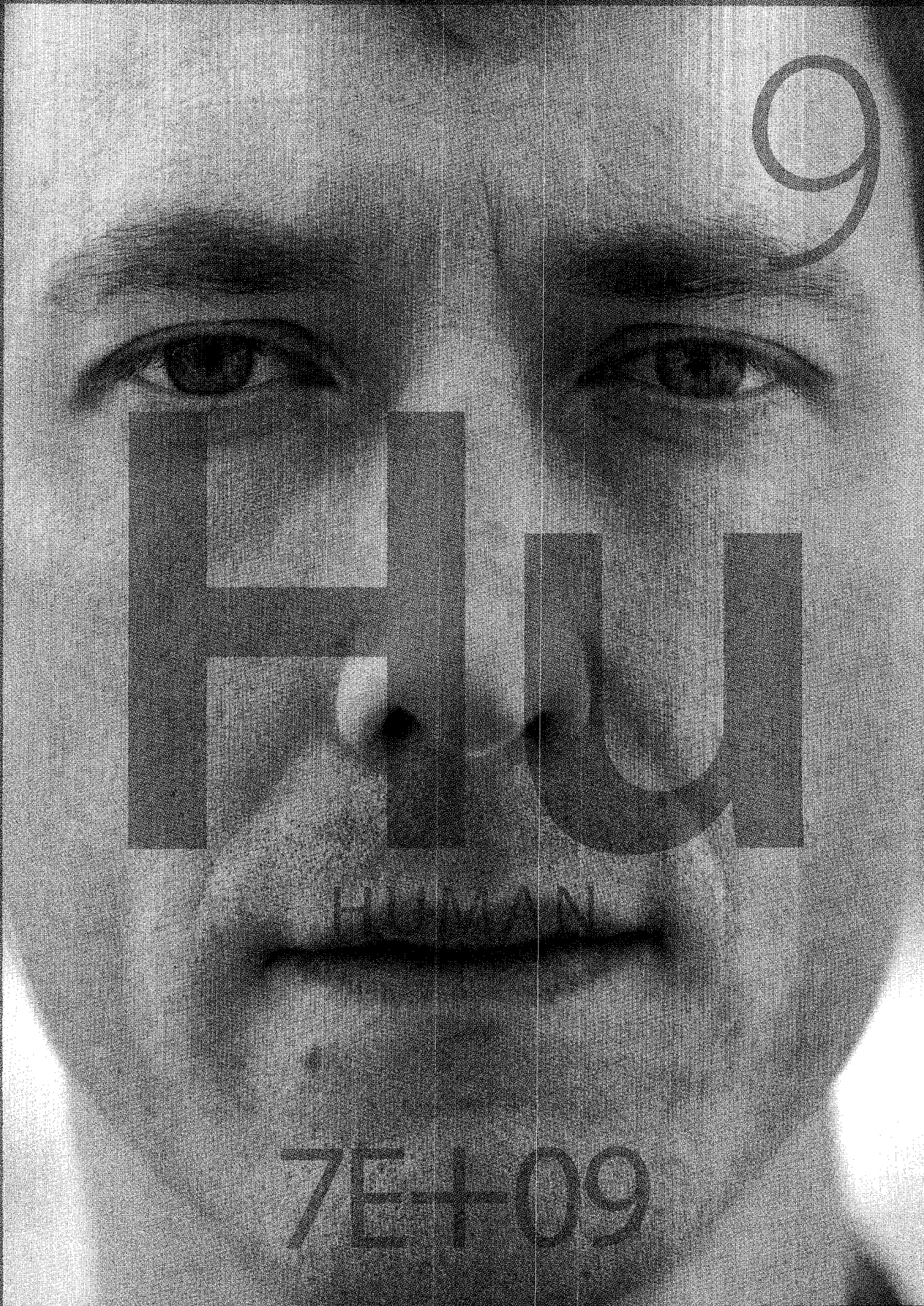
In the mid-nineteenth century, photography was in its infancy. Louis Daguerre had developed the daguerreotype in 1837, and by the 1850s travel photography and photographic portraiture were beginning to catch on. In a much-cited 1859 essay, Oliver Wendell Holmes impressed upon readers the revolutionary implications of this new technology.

Form is henceforth divorced from matter. In fact, matter as a visible object is of no great use any longer, except as the mould on which form is shaped. Give us a few

negatives of a thing worth seeing, taken from different points of view, and that is all we want of it. Pull it down or burn it up, if you please. We must, perhaps, sacrifice some luxury in the loss of color; but form and light and shade are the great things, and even color can be added, and perhaps by and by may be got direct from Nature.

There is only one Coliseum or Pantheon; but how many millions of potential negatives have they shed,—representatives of billions of pictures,—since they were erected! Matter in large masses must always be fixed and dear; form is cheap and transportable. We have got the fruit of creation now, and need not trouble ourselves with the core. Every conceivable object of Nature and Art will soon scale off its surface for us. Men will hunt all curious, beautiful, grand objects, as they hunt the cattle in South America, for their *skins*, and leave the carcasses as of little worth.

Volume 3, No. 20, pp. 738–748



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A TELEPHONIC CONVERSATION

June 1880

BY MARK TWAIN

....

Mark Twain's family was one of the first in Hartford to install a telephone (which had been patented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876) in its home. In 1880, Twain, bemused by this new device that permitted eavesdroppers to hear only one side of a conversation, wrote an amusing description of overhearing his wife talk on the telephone.

I consider that a conversation by telephone—when you are simply sitting by and not taking any part in that conversation—is one of the solemnest curiosities of this modern life. Yesterday I was writing a deep article on a sublime philosophical subject while such a conversation was going on in the room. I notice that one can always write best when somebody is talking through a telephone close by. Well, the thing began in this way. A member of our household came in and asked me to have our house put into communication with Mr. Bagley's, down town. I have observed, in many cities, that the [gentle] sex always shrink from calling up the central office themselves. I don't know why, but they do. So I touched the bell, and this talk ensued:

Central Office. [Gruffly.] Hello!

I. Is it the Central Office?

C. O. Of course it is. What do you want?

I. Will you switch me on to the Bagleys, please?

C. O. All right. Just keep your ear to the telephone.

Then I heard, *k-look, k-look, k'look? klook-klook-klook-look!* then a horrible "gritting" of teeth, and finally a piping female voice: "Y-e-s? [Rising inflection.] Did you wish to speak to me?"

Without answering, I handed the telephone to the applicant, and sat down. Then followed that queerest of all the queer things in this world,—a conversation with only one end to it. You hear questions asked; you don't hear the answer. You hear invitations given; you hear no thanks in return. You have listening pauses of dead silence, followed by apparently irrelevant and unjustifiable exclamations of glad surprise, or sorrow, or dismay. You can't make head or tail of the talk, because you never hear anything that the person at the other end of the wire says.

Volume 45, No. 272, pp. 841-843

THE NEW TALKING MACHINES

February 1889

BY PHILIP G. HUBERT JR.

....

*In 1889, Philip G. Hubert Jr., a noted architect and writer (his 1893 book *Men of Achievement: Inventors* remains in print*

today), commended Thomas Edison for his progress in developing the phonograph and predicted great things for its future, including books on "phonograms" and music reviews accompanied by sound clips.

Edison has devoted nearly two years to the task of making the phonograph of commercial use. He believes that he has succeeded. Whether or not the instrument shall enter into every-day life, as the telephone has done, is a question for the future ... Whether Mr. Edison, or Mr. Bell, or some one else puts the final touches which will take the apparatus out of the laboratory and make it practical for common use does not much matter. Some one will certainly do it. Those persons who smile incredulously when it is said that the perfected phonograph will do away with letter-writing, will read to us, will sing and play for us, will give us books, music, plays, speeches, at almost no cost, and become a constant source of instruction and amusement, must have forgotten the ridicule they heaped upon the rumor that an American inventor proposed to talk from New York to Chicago ...

As compared with the field of the telephone, that of the phonograph is limitless. The telephone must always remain somewhat of an expensive luxury, owing to the cost of maintaining wires, connecting stations, etc. The whole expense of the phonograph will be the first cost ... Imagine what the phonograph will do for the man on the borders of civilization! It will supply him with books in a far more welcome shape than print, for they will read themselves; the mail will bring him the latest play of London, or opera of Vienna. If he cares for political speeches, he can have the Congressional Record in the shape of phonograms. It is even possible to imagine that many books and stories may not see the light of print at all; they will go into the hands of their readers, or hearers rather, as phonograms ...

I really see no reason why the newspaper of the future should not come to the subscriber in the shape of a phonogram ... Think what a musical critic might be able to do for his public! He might give them whole arias from an opera or movements from a symphony, by way of proof or illustration.

Volume 63, No. 376, pp. 256-261

LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

BY ARTHUR D. LITTLE

July 1924

....

In the early years of the twentieth century, standardization, mass production, and the rise of consumer culture combined with new scientific advances to transform the everyday lives of Americans. In 1924, Arthur D. Little, the MIT-educated chemical engineer who in 1886 founded the world's first consulting company, took note of some of those dramatic changes.

Within the last ten years the United States has become the first industrial nation of the world ...

All those things that relieve household labor of its drudgery have their assured place in the future. Nature abhors a vacuum only because she has no carpets and rugs to clean. More and more homes will be equipped with electric appliances: toasters, irons, and washing machines; and the electric refrigerator is almost here ...

We have seen old-time necessities—as candles and open fires—come to be classed as luxuries ... Where our plutocrats progressed ten miles an hour behind a pair of horses, our workmen now go thirty in a Ford ...

Oil has become as essential as gunpowder to the navies of the world, and almost as dangerous to our politicians. On land the tank-wagon is already as familiar as the coal-truck, and the convenience and temporary cheapness of fuel oil have caused it to replace coal in many thousands of plants and dwellings. This tendency will continue for a time until scarcity and science put new values on petroleum ...

The sales of radio equipment reached a total of \$150,000,000 last year and are expected to double in 1924. The earth has become a whispering gallery, and the ocean has lost its solitude. The farm is no longer isolated, and the newspapers, the theaters, and the pulpit have a new competitor.

Man is no longer bound to the earth. He has achieved a three-dimensional existence ... It is now possible to fly from Vienna to Paris in ten hours and from Strasbourg to Constantinople in thirty ...

During the last fifty years science and invention have led us further and further from the world that was; deeper and deeper into a new environment. The process of change has been so rapid that readjustment has been difficult. Yet readjust ourselves we must.

Volume 134, No. 1, pp. 36-45

TELEVISION AND RADIO

May 1937

BY GILBERT SELDES

....

In 1937, the impending commercial launch of television inspired Gilbert Seldes, a commentator on popular culture and the author of The Seven Lively Arts (1924), to consider how this new technology would affect radio. Soon after this essay appeared, he became the first director of programming for CBS.

Sometime in the middle of 1938, television sets may be put on sale in the United States ...

The effect of television on radio will be so gradual that we may be able to preserve whatever in radio is desirable ... Because of radio, more of us took setting-up exercises in the morning, with possible improvement in our health ... Those who could not read found a new interest;

oratory was restored to its ancient glory in Presidential campaigns; the difference between the city and the country was made less, vaudeville artists got jobs, book sales increased; farmers knew the price paid for stock and grain in Chicago and Minneapolis ... millions of people, totally indifferent to social movements and international affairs and totally unhabituated to reading about such things, have become aware of them through news broadcasts and commentary ...

It is desirable for us to know what price we have paid for the creation of this incomparable engine of social influence: we have certainly created a habit of almost indiscriminate, almost apathetic listening; through the air has come a really incalculable number of stupidities; much that is trite and tasteless comes with what is intelligent and bright. A critic of society would have a delicate job to determine how far radio has corrupted and how far improved the public taste, and the very existence of a power so great as that of radio seems menacing to many observers ...

The audience which television will create will be more attentive and, if properly handled, more suggestible even than the audience of radio.

Volume 159, No. 5, pp. 531-541

AS WE MAY THINK

July 1945

BY VANNEVAR BUSH

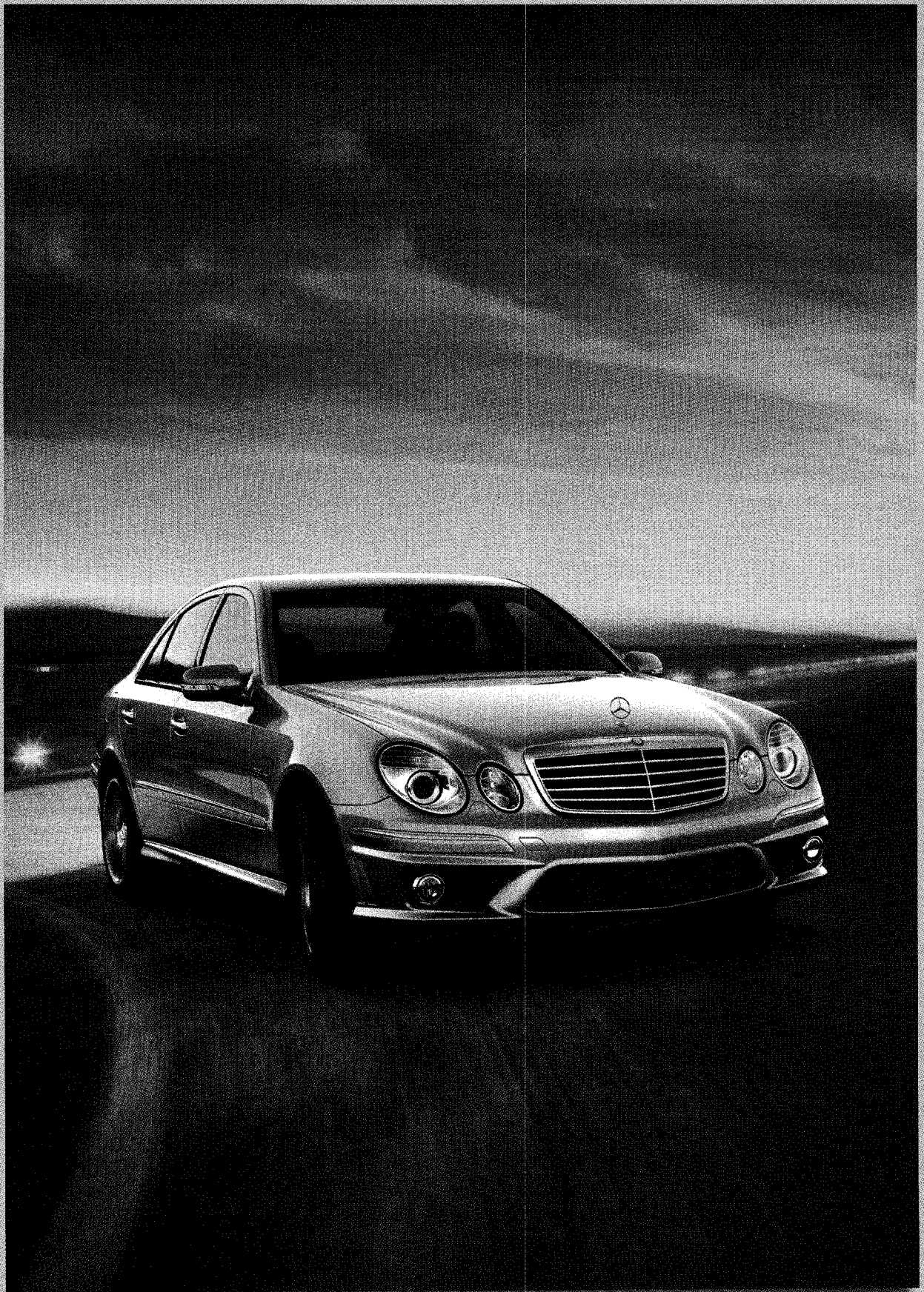
....

Near the close of World War II, Vannevar Bush, the former director of the wartime Office of Scientific Research and Development, urged scientists to turn their energies from war to the task of making the vast store of human knowledge accessible and useful. The "infostructure" he sketched out—including a proposal for what might be seen as a kind of precursor to hypertext—was destined to be realized in what we now know as the Internet.

The human mind ... operates by association. With one item in its grasp, it snaps instantly to the next that is suggested by the association of thoughts, in accordance with some intricate web of trails carried by the cells of the brain ...

Man cannot hope fully to duplicate this mental process artificially, but he certainly ought to be able to learn from it. In minor ways he may even improve, for his records have relative permanency ...

Consider a future device for individual use, which is a sort of mechanized private file and library. It needs a name, and, to coin one at random, "memex" will do. A memex is a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory ...



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The owner of the memex, let us say, is interested in the origin and properties of the bow and arrow. Specifically he is studying why the short Turkish bow was apparently superior to the English long bow in the skirmishes of the Crusades. He has dozens of possibly pertinent books and articles in his memex. First he runs through an encyclopedia, finds an interesting but sketchy article, leaves it projected. Next, in a history, he finds another pertinent item, and ties the two together. Thus he goes, building a trail of many items. Occasionally he inserts a comment of his own, either linking it into the main trail or joining it by a side trail to a particular item ...

Wholly new forms of encyclopedias will appear, ready-made with a mesh of associative trails running through them, ready to be dropped into the memex and there amplified. The lawyer has at his touch the associated opinions and decisions of his whole experience, and of the experience of friends and authorities ... The physician, puzzled by a patient's reactions, strikes the trail established in studying an earlier similar case, and runs rapidly through analogous case histories, with side references to the classics for the pertinent anatomy and histology ...

The inheritance from the master becomes, not only his additions to the world's record, but for his disciples the entire scaffolding by which they were erected.

Volume 176, No. 1, pp. 101-108

MOVING TOWARD THE CLONAL MAN

May 1971

BY JAMES D. WATSON

....

As the science of embryology advanced in rapid strides, the geneticist and Nobel laureate James D. Watson—best known for his research on the structure of DNA—considered the potentially troubling implications of such research.

The notion that man might sometime soon be reproduced asexually upsets many people. The main public effect of the remarkable clonal frog produced some ten years ago in Oxford by the zoologist John Gurdon has not been awe of the elegant scientific implication of this frog's existence, but fear that a similar experiment might someday be done with human cells. Until recently, however, this foreboding has seemed more like a science fiction scenario than a real problem which the human race has to live with ...

If the matter proceeds in its current nondirected fashion, a human being born of clonal reproduction most likely will appear on the earth within the next twenty to fifty years, and even sooner, if some nation should actively promote the venture ...

This is a matter far too important to be left solely in the hands of the scientific and medical communities. The belief that surrogate mothers and clonal babies are inevitable because science always moves forward ... represents a form of laissez-faire nonsense ... Just as the success of a corporate body in making money need not set the human condition ahead, neither does every scientific advance automatically make our lives more "meaningful." No doubt the person whose experimental skill will eventually bring forth a clonal baby will be given wide notoriety. But the child who grows up knowing that the world wants another Picasso may view his creator in a different light.

Volume 227, No. 5, pp. 50-53

LIVING WITH A COMPUTER

BY JAMES FALLOWS

July 1982

....

Always a technophile, Atlantic contributor and editor James Fallows was one of the first writers to incorporate a personal computer into his life. A few years later, he explained for Atlantic readers how it worked and how it was subtly influencing the way he wrote.

The process works this way.

When I sit down to write a letter or start the first draft of an article, I simply type on the keyboard and the words appear on the screen. For six months, I found it awkward to compose first drafts on the computer. Now I can hardly do it any other way. It is faster to type this way than with a normal typewriter, because you don't need to stop at the end of the line for a carriage return (the computer automatically "wraps" the words onto the next line when you reach the right-hand margin), and you never come to the end of the page, because the material on the screen keeps sliding up to make room for each new line. It is also more satisfying to the soul, because each maimed and misconceived passage can be made to vanish instantly, by the word or by the paragraph, leaving a pristine green field on which to make the next attempt ...

None of this may sound impressive to those who have fleets of secretaries at their disposal, or to writers who can say precisely what they mean the first time through. Isaac Asimov recently complained in *Popular Computing* that his word-processor didn't save him much time on revisions, since he composes at ninety words per minute and "95 per cent of what I write in the first draft stays in the second [and final] draft." My first-draft survival ratio is closer to one percent, so for me the age of painless revisions is a marvel.

You won't catch me saying that my machine has made me a better writer, but I don't think it has made me any worse.

Volume 250, No. 1, pp. 84-91

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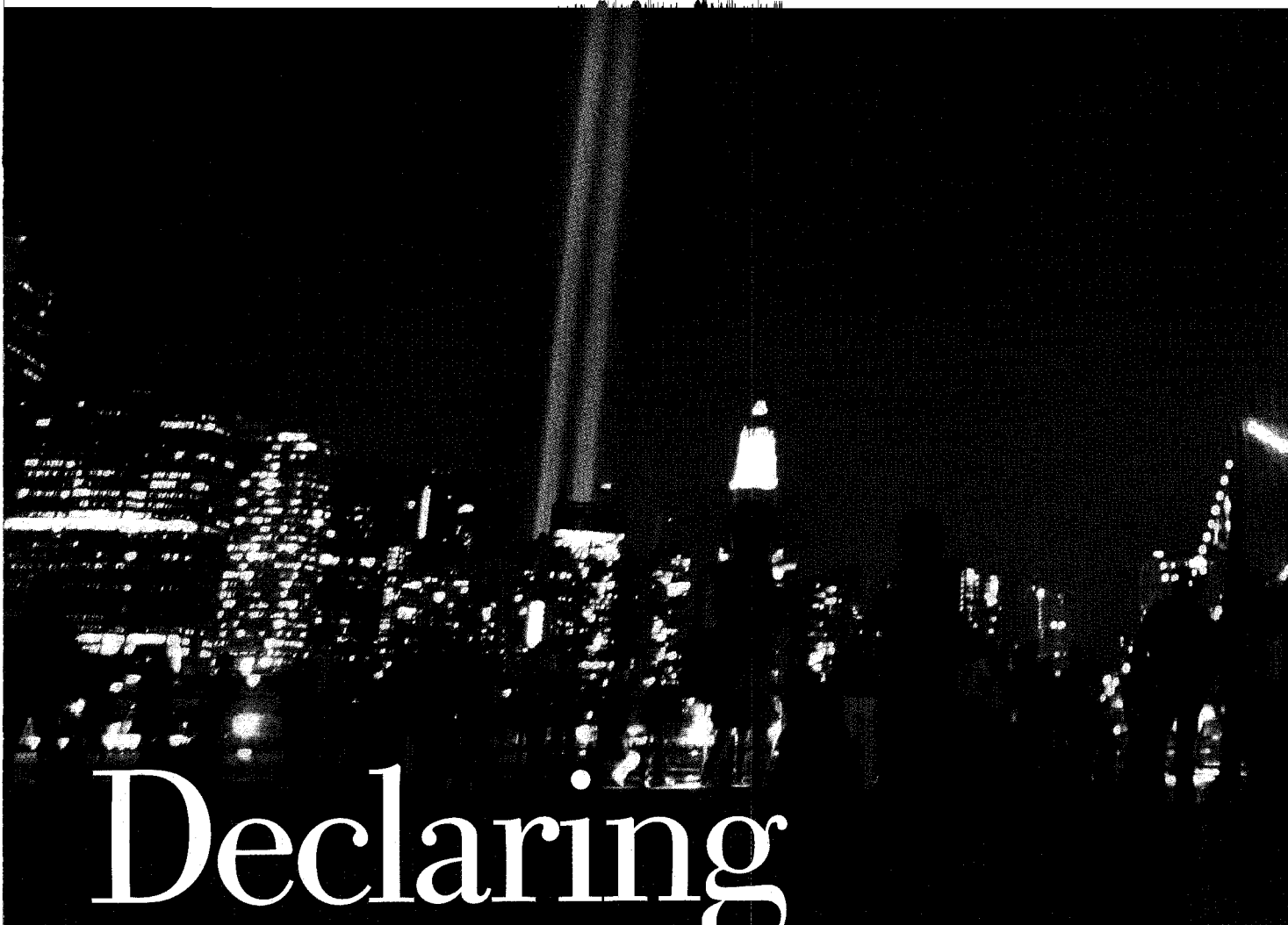
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Declaring Victory

The United States is succeeding in its struggle against terrorism. The time has come to declare the war on terror over, so that an even more effective military and diplomatic campaign can begin

BY JAMES FALLOWS

Osama bin Laden's public statements are those of a fanatic. But they often reveal a canny ability to size up the strengths and weaknesses of both allies and enemies, especially the United States. In his videotaped statement just days before the 2004 U.S. presidential election, bin Laden mocked the Bush administration for being unable to find him, for letting itself become mired in Iraq, and for refusing to come to grips with al-Qaeda's basic reason for being. One example: "Contrary to Bush's claim that we hate freedom, let him explain to us why we don't strike, for example, Sweden?" Bin Laden also boasted about how easy it had become for him "to provoke and bait" the American leadership: "All that we have to do is to

send two mujahideen ... to raise a piece of cloth on which is written 'al-Qaeda' in order to make the generals race there."

Perhaps al-Qaeda's leaders, like most people, cannot turn a similarly cold eye upon themselves. A purely realistic self-assessment must be all the more difficult for leaders who say that their struggle may last for centuries and that their guidance comes from outside this world. But what if al-Qaeda's leaders could see their faults and weaknesses as clearly as they see those of others? What if they had a Clausewitz or a Sun Tzu to speak frankly to them?

This spring and summer, I talked with some sixty experts about the current state of the conflict that bin Laden thinks of as the "world jihad"—and

James Fallows is a national correspondent of The Atlantic.

JIM HOLLANDER/EPA/CORBIS



that the U.S. government has called both the “global war on terror” and the “long war.” I wanted to know how it looked from the terrorists’ perspective. What had gone better than expected? What had gone worse? Could bin Laden assume, on any grounds other than pure faith, that the winds of history were at his back? Could he and his imitators count on a growing advantage because technology has made it so easy for individuals to inflict mass damage, and because politics and the media have made it so hard for great powers to fight dirty, drawn-out wars? Or might his strategists have to conclude that, at least for this stage of what they envision as a centuries-long struggle, their best days had passed?

About half of the authorities I spoke with were from military or intelligence organizations; the others were academics or members of think tanks, plus a few businesspeople. Half were Americans; the rest were Europeans, Middle Easterners, Australians, and others. Four years ago, most of these people had supported the decision to invade Iraq. Although they now said that the war had been a mistake (followed by what nearly all viewed as a disastrously mismanaged occupation), relatively few said that the United States should withdraw anytime soon. The reasons most of them gave were the need for America to make good on commitments, the importance

of keeping the Sunni parts of Iraq from turning into a new haven for global terrorists, and the chance that conditions in Iraq would eventually improve.

The initial surprise for me was how little fundamental disagreement I heard about how the situation looks through bin Laden’s eyes. While the people I spoke with differed on details, and while no one put things exactly the way I am about to here, there was consensus on the main points.

The larger and more important surprise was the implicit optimism about the U.S. situation that came through in these accounts—not on Iraq but on the fight against al-Qaeda and the numerous imitators it has spawned. For the past five years the United States has assumed itself to be locked in “asymmetric warfare,” with the advantages on the other side. Any of the tens of millions of foreigners entering the country each year could, in theory, be an enemy operative—to say nothing of the millions of potential recruits already here. Any of the dozens of ports, the scores of natural-gas plants and nuclear facilities, the hundreds of important bridges and tunnels, or the thousands of shopping malls, office towers, or sporting facilities could be the next target of attack. It is impossible to protect them all, and even trying could ruin America’s social fabric and public finances. The worst part

of the situation is helplessness, as America's officials and its public wait for an attack they know they cannot prevent.

Viewing the world from al-Qaeda's perspective, though, reveals the underappreciated advantage on America's side. The struggle does remain asymmetric, but it may have evolved in a way that gives target countries, especially the United States, more leverage and control than we have assumed. Yes, there could be another attack tomorrow, and most authorities assume that some attempts to blow up trains, bridges, buildings, or airplanes in America will eventually succeed. No modern nation is immune to politically inspired violence, and even the best-executed antiterrorism strategy will not be airtight.

But the overall prospect looks better than many Americans believe, and better than nearly all political rhetoric asserts. The essence of the change is this: because of al-Qaeda's own mistakes, and because of the things the United States and its allies have done right, al-Qaeda's ability to inflict direct damage in America or on Americans has been sharply reduced. Its successor groups in Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere will continue to pose dangers. But its hopes for fundamentally harming the United States now rest less on what it can do itself than on what it can trick, tempt, or goad us into doing. Its destiny is no longer in its own hands.

"Does al-Qaeda still constitute an 'existential' threat?" asks David Kilcullen, who has written several influential papers on the need for a new strategy against Islamic insurgents. Kilcullen, who as an Australian army officer commanded counter-insurgency units in East Timor, recently served as an adviser in the Pentagon and is now a senior adviser on counterterrorism at the State Department. He was referring to the argument about whether the terrorism of the twenty-first century endangers the very existence of the United States and its allies, as the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons did throughout the Cold War (and as the remnants of that arsenal still might).

"I think it does, but not for the obvious reasons," Kilcullen told me. He said the most useful analogy was the menace posed by European anarchists in the nineteenth century. "If you add up everyone they personally killed, it came to maybe 2,000 people, which is not an existential threat." But one of their number assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife. The act itself took the lives of two people. The unthinking response of European governments in effect started World War I. "So because of the reaction they provoked, they were able to kill millions of people and destroy a civilization.

"It is not the people al-Qaeda might kill that is the threat," he concluded. "*Our reaction* is what can cause the damage. It's al-Qaeda plus our response that creates the existential danger."

Since 9/11, this equation has worked in al-Qaeda's favor. That can be reversed.

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG FOR AL-QAEDA

Brian Michael Jenkins, a veteran terrorism expert at the RAND Corporation, recently published a book called *Unconquerable Nation: Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves*. It includes a fictional briefing, in Osama bin Laden's mountain stronghold, by an al-Qaeda strategist

assigned to sum up the state of world jihad five years after the 9/11 attacks. "Any al-Qaeda briefer would have to acknowledge that the past five years have been difficult," Jenkins says. His fictional briefer summarizes for bin Laden what happened after 9/11: "The Taliban were dispersed, and al-Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan were dismantled." Al-Qaeda operatives by the thousands have been arrested, detained, or killed. So have many members of the crucial al-Qaeda leadership circle around bin Laden and his chief strategist, Ayman al-Zawahiri. Moreover, Jenkins's briefer warns, it has become harder for the remaining al-Qaeda leaders to carry out the organization's most basic functions: "Because of increased intelligence efforts by the United States and its allies, transactions of any type—communications, travel, money transfers—have become more dangerous for the jihadists. Training and operations have been decentralized, raising the risk of fragmentation and loss of unity. Jihadists everywhere face the threat of capture or martyrdom."

Michael Scheuer was chief of the CIA's Osama bin Laden unit from 1995 to 1999 and was a special adviser to it for three years after 9/11 (the CIA disbanded the unit this summer). In a similar mock situation report that Scheuer has presented at military conferences, a fictional briefer tells his superiors in al-Qaeda: "We must always keep in focus the huge downside of this war. We are, put simply, being hunted and attacked by the most powerful nation in the history of the world. And despite the heavy personnel losses we have suffered, may God accept them as martyrs, the United States has not yet made the full destructiveness of its power felt."

Any assessment of the world five years after 9/11 begins with the damage inflicted on "Al-Qaeda Central"—the organization led by bin Laden and al-Zawahiri that, from the late 1990s onward, both inspired and organized the worldwide anti-American campaign. "Their command structure is gone, their Afghan sanctuary is gone, their ability to move around and hold meetings is gone, their financial and communications networks have been hit hard," says Seth Stodder, a former official in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Kilcullen says, "The al-Qaeda that existed in 2001 simply no longer exists. In 2001 it was a relatively centralized organization, with a planning hub, a propaganda hub, a leadership team, all within a narrow geographic area. All that is gone, because we destroyed it." Where bin Laden's central leadership team could once wire money around the world using normal bank networks, it now must rely on couriers with vests full of cash. (I heard this point frequently in interviews, weeks before the controversial news stories revealing that the U.S. government had in fact been tracking international bank transfers. Everyone I spoke with assumed that some sort of tracking was firmly in place—and that the commanders of al-Qaeda had changed their behavior in a way that showed they were aware of it as well.) Where bin Laden's network could once use satellite phones and the Internet for communication, it now has to avoid most forms of electronic communication, which leave an electronic trail back to the user. Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri now send information out through videotapes and via operatives in Internet

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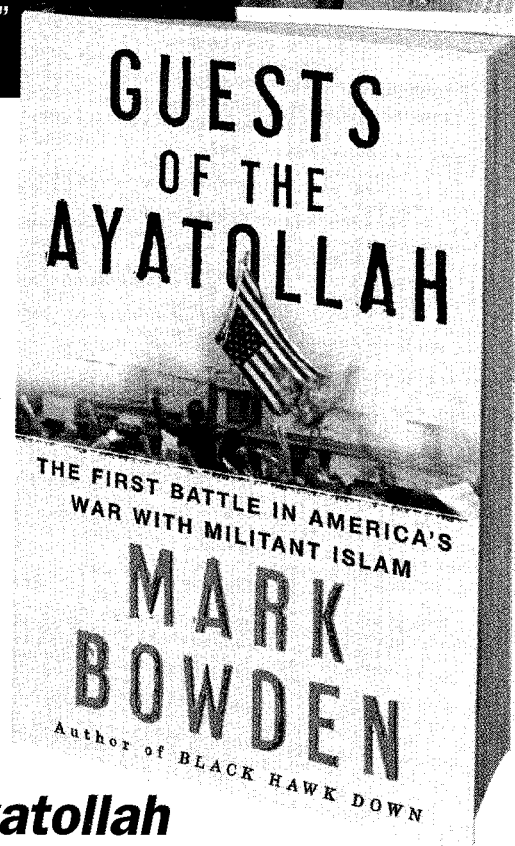
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"Readers may wonder why they should read a blow-by-blow account of an event so widely reported so long ago. But as the story unfolds, illuminated by journalist Mark Bowden's meticulous reporting and measured prose, what seems familiar is suddenly fresh. The significance crystallizes. Uncannily, the events prefigure those of the post-Sept. 11 era: the initial 'why do they hate us?' shock; the impotent outrage; the sense that we suddenly faced a baffling and unexpected threat, and that harsh—even reckless—measures were needed to confront it. It was, in retrospect, a defining moment for the United States."

—Douglas Birch, *The Baltimore Sun*

A Book Sense Selection

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The world premiere miniseries based on *Guests of the Ayatollah* coming to the Discovery Times Channel June 2006



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chat rooms. "The Internet is all well and good, but it's not like meeting face to face or conducting training," says Peter Bergen, author of *The Osama bin Laden I Know*. "Their reliance on it is a sign of their weakness."

Scheuer, Richard Clarke (the former White House terrorism adviser), and others have long complained that following the bombing of the U.S.S. *Cole*, in 2000, the United States should have been prepared to launch a retaliatory raid on Afghanistan immediately after any successor attack—"the next day!" Scheuer told me—rather than taking several weeks to strike, and that it might well have chased down and eliminated bin Laden and al-Zawahiri if it had concentrated on them throughout 2002 rather than being distracted into Iraq. Nonetheless, most experts agree that the combination of routing the Taliban, taking away training camps, policing the financial networks, killing many al-Qaeda lieutenants, and maintaining electronic and aerial surveillance has put bin Laden and al-Zawahiri in a situation in which they can survive and inspire but not do much more.

"Al-Qaeda has taken some very hard blows," Martin van Creveld, a military historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the author of *The Transformation of War* and other books, told me. "Osama bin Laden is almost irrelevant, from an operational point of view. This is one reason why he has to keep releasing videos."

But the shift to these successor groups has made it significantly harder for terrorists of any provenance to achieve what all of them would like: a "second 9/11," a large-scale attack on the U.S. mainland that would kill hundreds or thousands of people and terrorize hundreds of millions.

I asked everyone I spoke with some variant of the familiar American question: Why, through nearly five years after 9/11, had there not been another big attack on U.S. soil? People prefaced their replies with reminders that the future is unknowable, that the situation could change tomorrow, and that the reasons for America's safety so far were not fully understood. But most then went on to say that another shocking, 9/11-scale coordinated attack was probably too hard for today's atomized terrorist groups to pull off.

The whole array of "homeland security" steps had made the United States a somewhat more difficult target to attack, most people said. But not a single person began the list of important post-9/11 changes with these real, if modest, measures of domestic protection. Indeed, nearly all emphasized the haphazard, wasteful, and sometimes self-defeating nature of the DHS's approach.

"It is harder to get into the country—to a fault," says Seth Stodder. Much tougher visa rules, especially for foreign students, have probably kept future Mohammed Attas out of flight schools. But they may also be keeping out

"They keep killing Muslim civilians," says Peter Bergen. "That is their Achilles' heel. Every time the bombs go off and kill civilians, it works in our favor."

Does this matter, given bin Laden's elevation to Che Guevara-like symbolic status and his ability to sneak out no fewer than twenty-four recorded messages between 9/11 and the summer of this year? "For bin Laden, it's clearly a consolation prize to become a 'philosophy' rather than an organization," says Caleb Carr, a history professor at Bard College and the author of *The Lessons of Terror*. "They already were a global philosophy, but they used to have a command structure too. It's like the difference between Marxism and Leninism, and they're back to just being Marx." Marc Sageman, author of *Understanding Terror Networks*, says that before 9/11, people attracted to the terrorist cause could come to Afghanistan for camaraderie, indoctrination, and specific operational training. "Now you can't find al-Qaeda, so it's difficult to join them," he told me. "People have to figure out what to do on their own."

The shift from a coherent Al-Qaeda Central to a global proliferation of "self-starter" terrorist groups—those inspired by bin Laden's movement but not coordinated by it—has obviously not eliminated the danger of attacks. In different ways, the bombings in Madrid in 2004, in Bali and London in 2005, and in Iraq throughout the past three years all illustrate the menace—and, in the view of many people I spoke with, prefigure the threats—that could arise in the United States.

future Andrew Groves and Sergey Brins. (Grove, born in Hungary, cofounded Intel; Brin, born in Russia, cofounded Google.) "The student-visa crackdown was to deal with Atta," Stodder says. "It's affecting the commanding heights of our tech economy." Richard Clarke says that the domestic change that has had the biggest protective effect is not any governmental measure but an increased public scrutiny of anyone who "looks Muslim." "It's a terrible, racist reaction," Clarke says, "but it has made it harder for them to operate."

The DHS now spends \$42 billion a year on its vast range of activities, which include FEMA and other disaster-relief efforts, the Coast Guard, immigration, and border and customs operations. Of this, about \$5 billion goes toward screening passengers at airports. The widely held view among security experts is that this airport spending is largely for show. Strengthened cockpit doors and a flying public that knows what happened on 9/11 mean that commercial airliners are highly unlikely to be used again as targeted flying bombs. "The inspection process is mostly security theater, to make people feel safe about flying," says John Mueller, a political scientist at Ohio State and the author of a forthcoming book about the security-industrial complex. He adds that because fears "are not purely rational, if it makes people feel better, the effort may be worth it."

John Robb, a former clandestine-operations specialist for the Air Force who now writes a blog called “Global Guerrillas,” says that it is relatively easy for terrorists to disrupt society’s normal operations—think of daily life in Israel, or England under assault from the IRA. But large-scale symbolic shock, of the type so stunningly achieved on 9/11 and advocated by bin Laden ever since, is difficult to repeat or sustain. “There are diminishing returns on symbolic terrorism,” Robb told me. “Each time it happens, the public becomes desensitized, and the media pays less attention.” To maintain the level of terror, each attack must top the previous one—and in Robb’s view, “nothing will ever top 9/11.” He allows for the obvious and significant exception of terrorists getting hold of a nuclear weapon. But, like most people I interviewed, he says this is harder and less likely than the public assumes. Moreover, if nuclear weapons constitute the one true existential threat, then countering the proliferation of those weapons themselves is what American policy should address, more than fighting terrorism in general. For a big, coordinated, nonnuclear attack, he says, “the number of people involved is substantial, the lead time is long, the degree of coordination is great, and the specific skills you need are considerable. It’s not realistic for al-Qaeda anymore.”

Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert at Georgetown University and the author of *Inside Terrorism* and other books, says that the 9/11-style spectacular attack remains fundamental to Osama bin Laden’s hopes, because of his belief that it would “catapult him back into being in charge of the movement.” Robb’s fear is that after being thwarted in their quest to blow up the Rose Bowl or the Capitol, today’s loosely affiliated terrorists will turn to the smaller-scale attacks on economic targets—power plants, rail lines—that are very hard to prevent and can do tremendous cumulative damage.

The dispersed nature of the new al-Qaeda creates other difficulties for potential terrorists. For one, the recruitment of self-starter cells within the United States is thought to have failed so far. Spain, England, France, and the Netherlands are among the countries alarmed to find Islamic extremists among people whose families have lived in Europe for two or three generations. “The patriotism of the American Muslim community has been grossly underreported,” says Marc Sageman, who has studied the process by which people decide to join or leave terrorist networks. According to Daniel Benjamin, a former official on the National Security Council and coauthor of *The Next Attack*, Muslims in America “have been our first line of defense.” Even though many have been “unnerved by a law-enforcement approach that might have been inevitable but was still disturbing,” the community has been “pretty much immune to the jihadist virus.”

Something about the Arab and Muslim immigrants who have come to America, or about their absorption here, has made them basically similar to other well-assimilated American ethnic groups—and basically different from the estranged Muslim underclass of much of Europe. Sageman points out that western European countries, taken together, have slightly more than twice as large a Muslim population as does the United States (roughly 6 million in the United States, versus

6 million in France, 3 million in Germany, 2 million in the United Kingdom, more than a million in Italy, and several million elsewhere). But most measures of Muslim disaffection or upheaval in Europe—arrests, riots, violence based on religion—show it to be ten to fifty times worse than here.

The median income of Muslims in France, Germany, and Britain is lower than that of people in those countries as a whole. The median income of Arab Americans (many of whom are Christians originally from Lebanon) is actually higher than the overall American one. So are their business-ownership rate and their possession of college and graduate degrees. The same is true of most other groups who have been here for several generations, a fact that in turn underscores the normality of the Arab and Muslim experience. The difference between the European and American assimilation of Muslims becomes most apparent in the second generation, when American Muslims are culturally and economically Americanized and many European Muslims often develop a sharper sense of alienation.



In Jordan, Muslim outrage at a bombing

“If you ask a second-generation American Muslim,” says Robert Leiken, author of *Bearers of Global Jihad: Immigration and National Security After 9/11*, “he will say, ‘I’m an American and a Muslim.’ A second-generation Turk in Germany is a Turk, and a French Moroccan doesn’t know what he is.”

The point is not that all is comfortable between American Muslims and their fellow citizens. Many measures show that anti-Muslim sentiment is up, as are complaints by Muslims about discrimination and official mistreatment. James Woolsey, a former director of the CIA, points out that while very few American Muslims sympathize with Wahhabi-style extremism, mosques and institutions representing extreme views have begun to appear. Yet what many Western nations fear—widespread terrorist recruitment or activity from among their own population—for now seems less likely in the United States.

An even deeper problem for al-Qaeda and the self-starter groups is an apparent erosion of support where it would be most likely and necessary: in the Arab and Muslim worlds. The difficulty involves what they have done, and what they cannot do.

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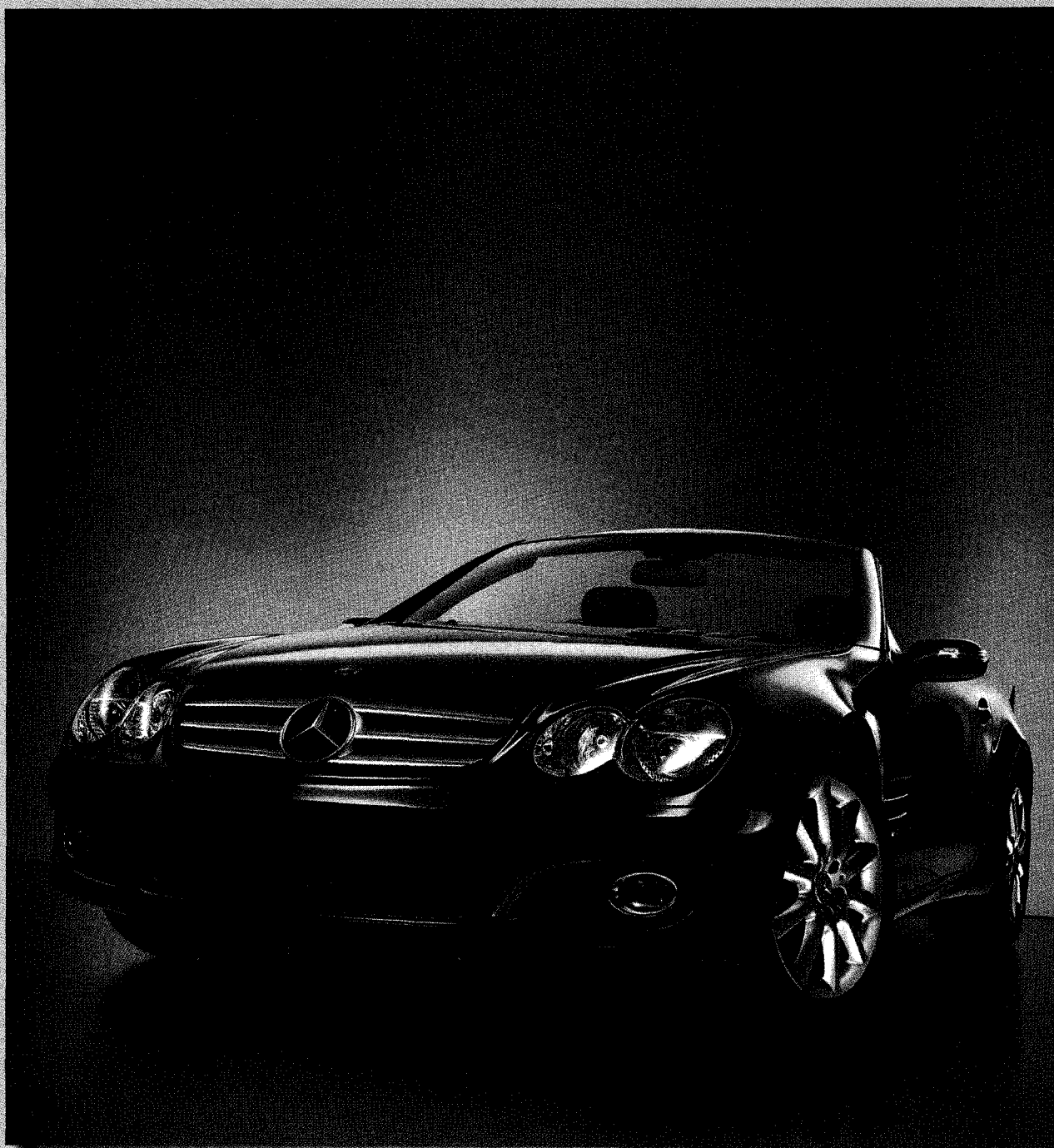
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What they have done is to follow the terrorist's logic of steadily escalating the degree of carnage and violence—which has meant violating the guerrilla warrior's logic of bringing the civilian population to your side. This trade-off has not been so visible to Americans, because most of the carnage is in Iraq. There, insurgents have slaughtered civilians daily, before and after the death this spring of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. But since American troops are also assumed to be killing civilians, the anti-insurgent backlash is muddled.

The situation is different elsewhere. "Like Tourette's syndrome, they keep killing Muslim civilians," says Peter Bergen. "That is their Achilles' heel. Every time the bombs go off and kill civilians, it works in our favor. It's a double whammy when the civilians they kill are Muslims." Last November, groups directed by al-Zarqawi set off bombs in three hotels in Amman, Jordan. Some sixty civilians were killed, including thirty-eight at a wedding. The result was to turn Jordanian public opinion against al-Qaeda and al-Zarqawi, and to make the Jordanian government more openly cooperative with the United States. In October 2002,

Marc Sageman says that those recruited into terrorist groups, from the nineteenth-century anarchists to the present jihadists, are typically "romantic young people in a hurry, with a dream of changing the world." The romance is easiest to maintain during strikes on distant, depersonalized enemies, like the Americans overseas or the Israelis behind their new barriers. But as attacks move into the terrorists' own neighborhoods, and as the victims include recognizable kinsmen or fellow citizens, the romance fades. That is why, Sageman says, "my long-term view is that the militants will keep pushing the envelope and committing more atrocities to the point that the dream will no longer be attractive to young people."

The other part of a battle of ideas is the ability to offer a positive vision, and there al-Qaeda's failure has been complete.

Shibley Telhami, of the University of Maryland, has conducted polls in six Muslim countries since 9/11, gauging popular attitudes toward the United States and toward al-Qaeda. "If their aim was to be the source of inspiration for the Muslim world," Telhami says of al-Qaeda, "they are not that." Telhami's polls, like those from the Pew Global Atti-

"For bin Laden, it's clearly a consolation prize to become a 'philosophy' rather than an organization," says Caleb Carr. "It's like the difference between Marxism and Leninism, and they're back to just being Marx."

a suicide bomber from Jemaah Islamiyah (the Indonesian counterpart to al-Qaeda) blew up a nightclub in Bali and killed more than 200 people. Most of them were Australians and other foreigners, and the attack created little backlash among Muslims. A year ago, a second wave of suicide bombings in Bali killed twenty people, fifteen of them Indonesians. "The reaction in Indonesia was extremely negative," Bergen says. Other people described similar reactions to incidents in Egypt, Pakistan, even Saudi Arabia.

If you have a taste for doctrinal dispute, the internal al-Qaeda documents that Bergen included in his book on bin Laden and those available elsewhere make fascinating reading. Fawaz Gerges, of Sarah Lawrence College, who was raised in Lebanon, describes some of these documents in his new book, *Journey of the Jihadist*. He quotes one Egyptian extremist, who is still in prison for his role in the assassination of Anwar Sadat, as saying that al-Qaeda had left the world's Muslims worse off than before 9/11. This man, Mohammed Essam Derbala, told Gerges that jihad for the sake of jihad—which is how he viewed al-Qaeda's efforts—had backfired, and that, as Gerges writes, "It produces the opposite of the desired results: the downfall of the Taliban regime and the slaughter of thousands of young Muslims." In 2005, al-Zawahiri rebuked al-Zarqawi for the extreme brutality of his terrorist campaign within Iraq, in what Bergen has called the "enough with the beheadings!" memo.

tudes Survey, show a steady increase in hostility toward the United States—but no surge of enthusiasm for Taliban-style fundamentalist life. "What we see in the polls," Telhami told me shortly before al-Zarqawi was killed, "is that many people would like bin Laden and Zarqawi to hurt America. But they do not want bin Laden to rule their children." In his polls, people were asked to identify which aspect of al-Qaeda they most sympathized with. Only 6 percent of respondents chose al-Qaeda's advocacy of a puritanical Islamic state.

"The things we have done right have hurt al-Qaeda," says Caleb Carr, who strongly supported the reasoning behind the war in Iraq. By this he means the rout of the Taliban and the continued surveillance of Pakistan. "The things they have done wrong"—meaning the attacks on mosques and markets—"have hurt them worse."

"There is only one thing keeping them going now," he added. "That is our incredible mistakes." The biggest series of mistakes all of these experts have in mind is Iraq.

WHAT HAS GONE RIGHT FOR AL-QAEDA

Over the past five years Americans have heard about "asymmetric war," the "long war," and "fourth-generation war." Here is an important but underdiscussed difference between all of these and "regular war."

In its past military encounters, the United States was mainly concerned about the damage an enemy could do

directly—the Soviet Union with nuclear missiles, Axis-era Germany or Japan with shock troops. In the modern brand of terrorist warfare, what an enemy can do directly is limited. The most dangerous thing it can do is to provoke you into hurting yourself.

This is what David Kilcullen meant in saying that the response to terrorism was potentially far more destructive than the deed itself. And it is why most people I spoke with said that three kinds of American reaction—the war in Iraq, the economic consequences of willy-nilly spending on security, and the erosion of America’s moral authority—were responsible for such strength as al-Qaeda now maintained.

“You only have to look at the Iraq War to see how much damage you can do to yourself by your response,” Kilcullen told me. He is another of those who supported the war and consider it important to fight toward some kind of victory, but who recognize the ways in which this conflict has helped al-Qaeda. So far the war in Iraq has advanced the jihadist cause because it generates a steady supply of Islamic victims, or martyrs; because it seems to prove Osama bin Laden’s contention that America lusts to occupy Islam’s sacred sites, abuse Muslim people, and steal Muslim resources; and because it raises the tantalizing possibility that humble Muslim insurgents, with cheap, primitive weapons, can once more hobble and ultimately destroy a superpower, as they believe they did to the Soviet Union in Afghanistan twenty years ago. The United States also played a large role in thwarting the Soviets, but that doesn’t matter. For mythic purposes, mujahideen brought down one anti-Islamic army and can bring down another.

If the United States stays in Iraq, it keeps making enemies. If it leaves, it goes dragging its tail. Six months after the start of the Iraq War, bin Laden issued a bitter criticism of the Bush administration (“Bush and his gang, with their heavy sticks and hard hearts, are an evil to all humankind”). After the president was reelected, bin Laden and al-Zawahiri said that the jihad against all Americans should continue until the United States changes its policy toward Muslim countries. “Many believe that the United States, bloodied and exhausted by the insurgency, stripped of its allies, will eventually withdraw,” Brian Jenkins writes of the jihadist view. From that perspective, “this defeat alone could bring about the collapse of the United States, just as collapse followed the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan.”

Jim Guirard, a writer and former Senate staffer, says that America’s response has helped confirm bin Laden’s worldview in an unintended way. The Arabic terms often brought into English to describe Islamic extremists—*jihadists* or *mujahideen* for “warriors,” plus the less-frequently used *shahiddin* for “martyrs”—are, according to Guirard, exactly the terms al-Qaeda would like to see used. *Mujahideen* essentially means “holy warriors”; the other terms imply righteous struggle in the cause of Islam. The Iraqi clergyman-warlord Muqtada al-Sadr named his paramilitary force the Mahdi Army. To Sunnis and Shiites alike, the Mahdi is the ultimate savior of mankind, equivalent to the Messiah. Branches of Islam disagree about the Mahdi’s exact identity and the timing

of his arrival on earth, but each time U.S. officials refer to insurgents of the Mahdi Army, they confer legitimacy on their opponent in all Muslims’ eyes.

With the advice of Islamic scholars and think-tank officials, Guirard has assembled an alternative lexicon he thinks U.S. officials should use in both English and Arabic. These include *hirabah* (“unholy war”) instead of *jihad*; *irhabists* (“terrorists”) instead of *jihadists*; *mufsidoon* (“evildoers”) instead of *mujahideen*; and so on. The long-term effect, he says, would be like labeling certain kinds of battle *genocide* or *war crime* rather than plain *combat*—not decisive, but useful. Conceivably President Bush’s frequent use of *evildoers* to describe terrorists and insurgents represented a deliberate step in this direction, intended to steer the Arabic translation of his comments toward the derogatory terms. (I could not confirm whether there was any such plan behind Bush’s choice of words, or whether it had made much difference in translations. While granting Guirard’s point, for convenience I’ll stick with the familiar terms here.)

The fictional al-Qaeda strategist in Brian Jenkins’s book tells Osama bin Laden that the U.S. presence in Iraq “surely is a gift from Allah,” because it has trapped American soldiers “where they are vulnerable to the kind of warfare the jihadists wage best: lying in wait to attack; carrying out assassinations, kidnappings, ambushes, and suicide attacks; destroying the economy; making the enemy’s life untenable.” The Egyptian militants profiled in *Journey of the Jihadist* told Fawaz Cerges that they were repelled by al-Qaeda after the 9/11 attacks and deaf to its appeals to undertake jihad against the United States. But that all changed, they said, when the United States invaded Iraq.

Because the general point is familiar, I’ll let one more anecdote about the consequences of invading Iraq stand for many that I heard. When Americans think of satellite surveillance and the National Security Agency, they are likely to imagine something out of the TV show *24*: a limitless set of eyes in the sky that can watch everything, all the time. In fact, even today’s amply funded NSA can watch only a limited number of sites. “Our overhead imagery is dedicated to force protection in Iraq and Afghanistan,” I was told by a former intelligence official who would not let me use his name. He meant that the satellites are tied up following U.S. troops on patrol and in firefights to let them know who might be waiting in ambush. “There are still ammo dumps in Iraq that are open to insurgents,” he said, “but we lack the imagery to cover them—let alone what people might be dreaming up in Thailand or Bangladesh.” Because so many spy satellites are trained on the countries we have invaded, they tell us less than they used to about the rest of the world.

Documents captured after 9/11 showed that bin Laden hoped to provoke the United States into an invasion and occupation that would entail all the complications that have arisen in Iraq. His only error was to think that the place where Americans would get stuck would be Afghanistan.

Bin Laden also hoped that such an entrapment would drain the United States financially. Many al-Qaeda documents refer to the importance of sapping American economic

strength as a step toward reducing America's ability to throw its weight around in the Middle East. Bin Laden imagined this would happen largely through attacks on America's oil supply. This is still a goal. For instance, a 2004 fatwa from the imprisoned head of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia declared that targeting oil pipelines and refineries was a legitimate form of economic jihad—and that economic jihad “is one of the most powerful ways in which we can take revenge on the infidels during this present stage.” The fatwa went on to offer an analysis many economists would be proud of, laying out all the steps that would lead from a less-secure oil supply to a less-productive American economy and ultimately to a run on the dollar. (It also emphasized that oil wells themselves should be attacked only as a last resort, because news coverage of the smoke and fires would hurt al-Qaeda's image.)

Higher-priced oil has hurt America, but what has hurt more is the economic reaction bin Laden didn't fully foresee. This is the systematic drag on public and private resources created by the undifferentiated need to be “secure.”

The effect is most obvious on the public level. “The economy as a whole took six months or so to recover from the effects of 9/11,” Richard Clarke told me. “The federal budget never recovered. The federal budget is in a permanent mess, to a large degree because of 9/11.” At the start of 2001, the federal budget was \$125 billion in surplus. Now it is \$300 billion in deficit.

Dearlove, the former director of Britain's secret intelligence agency, MI-6, told me. He pointed out that by the end of the Cold War there was no dispute worldwide about which side held the moral high ground—and that this made his work as a spymaster far easier. “Potential recruits would come to us because they believed in the cause,” he said. A senior army officer from a country whose forces are fighting alongside America's in Iraq similarly told me that America “simply has to recapture its moral authority.” His reasoning:

The United States is so powerful militarily that by its very nature it represents a threat to every other nation on earth. The only country that could theoretically destroy every single other country is the United States. The only way we can say that the U.S. is *not* a threat is by looking at intent, and that depends on moral authority. If you're not sure the United States is going to do the right thing, you can't trust it with that power, so you begin thinking, How can I balance it off and find other alliances to protect myself?

America's glory has been its openness and idealism, internally and externally. Each has been constrained from time to time, but not for as long or in as open-ended a way as now. “We are slowly changing their way of life,” Michael Scheuer's fictional adviser to bin Laden says in his briefing. The Americans' capital city is more bunkerlike than it was

Al-Qaeda can do more harm to the United States than to, say, Italy because the self-damaging potential of an American overreaction is so vast.

A total of five people died from anthrax spores sent through the mail shortly after 9/11. In *Devils and Duct Tape*, his forthcoming book, John Mueller points out that the U.S. Postal Service will eventually spend about \$5 billion on protective screening equipment and other measures in response to the anthrax threat, or about \$1 billion per fatality. Each new security guard, each extra checkpoint or biometric measure, is both a direct cost and an indirect drag on economic flexibility.

If bin Laden hadn't fully anticipated this effect, he certainly recognized it after it occurred. In his statement just before the 2004 election, he quoted the finding of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (!) to the effect that the total cost, direct and indirect, to America of the 9/11 attacks was at least \$500 billion. Bin Laden gleefully pointed out that the attacks had cost al-Qaeda about \$500,000, for a million-to-one payoff ratio. America's deficit spending for Iraq and homeland security was, he said, “evidence of the success of the bleed-until-bankruptcy plan, with Allah's permission.”

The final destructive response helping al-Qaeda has been America's estrangement from its allies and diminution of its traditionally vast “soft power.” “America's cause is doomed unless it regains the moral high ground,” Sir Richard

during World War II, he comments; the people live as if terrified, and watch passively as elementary-school children go through metal detectors before entering museums.

“There is one thing above all that bin Laden can feel relieved about,” Caleb Carr told me. “It's that we have never stopped to reassess our situation. We have been so busy reacting that we have not yet said, ‘We've made some mistakes, we've done serious damage to ourselves, so let's think about our position and strategies.’”

Seizing that opportunity can give America its edge.

CHANGING THE GAME

Here is something I never expected. When I began this reporting, I imagined that it would mean a further plunge into current-events gloom. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri might be under siege, but they had spawned countless imitators. Instead of having one main terrorist group to worry about, the United States now had hundreds. America's explicit efforts to win the “war of ideas” for support from the world's Muslims were being drowned out by the implicit messages from Afghanistan and Iraq and Guantánamo (and from the State Department, as it rejected requests for student visas). Our enemies were thinking in

centuries-long terms, while we were living election to election—and with the results of the 2004 presidential election, anti-American sentiment hardened among Muslims worldwide. Sooner or later our enemies would find one of our vulnerable points—and then another, and another.

To some degree, many of these discouraging possibilities are likely to come true. Hostile groups and individuals will keep planning attacks on the United States. Some of the attacks will succeed. Americans—especially those who live in Washington, New York, and other big cities—will share a reality known for many years to residents of cities from London to Jerusalem: that the perils of urban life include the risk of being a civilian casualty of worldwide political tensions.

But the deeper and more discouraging prospect—that the United States is doomed to spend decades cowering defensively—need not come true. How can the United States regain the initiative against terrorists, as opposed to living in a permanent crouch? By recognizing the point that I heard from so many military strategists: that terrorists, through their own efforts, can damage but not destroy us. Their real destructive power, again, lies in what they can provoke us to do. While the United States can never completely control what violent groups intend and sometimes achieve, it can determine its own response. That we have this power should come as good and important news, because it switches the strategic advantage to our side.

So far, the United States has been as predictable in its responses as al-Qaeda could have dreamed. Early in 2004, a Saudi exile named Saad al-Faqih was interviewed by the online publication *Terrorism Monitor*. Al-Faqih, who leads an opposition group seeking political reform in Saudi Arabia, is a longtime observer of his fellow Saudi Osama bin Laden and of the evolution of bin Laden's doctrine for al-Qaeda.

In the interview, al-Faqih said that for nearly a decade, bin Laden and al-Zawahiri had followed a powerful grand strategy for confronting the United States. Their approach boiled down to "superpower baiting" (as John Robb, of the Global Guerrillas blog, put it in an article about the interview). The most predictable thing about Americans, in this view, was that they would rise to the bait of a challenge or provocation. "Zawahiri impressed upon bin Laden the importance of understanding the American mentality," al-Faqih said. He said he believed that al-Zawahiri had at some point told bin Laden something like this:

The American mentality is a cowboy mentality—if you confront them ... they will react in an extreme manner. In other words, America with all its resources and establishments will shrink into a cowboy when irritated successfully. They will then elevate you, and this will satisfy the Muslim longing for a leader who can successfully challenge the West.

The United States is immeasurably stronger than al-Qaeda, but against jujitsu forms of attack its strength has been its disadvantage. The predictability of the U.S. response has allowed opponents to turn our bulk and momentum

against us. Al-Qaeda can do more harm to the United States than to, say, Italy because the self-damaging potential of an uncontrolled American reaction is so vast.

How can the United States escape this trap? Very simply: by declaring that the "global war on terror" is over, and that we have won. "The wartime approach made sense for a while," Dearlove says. "But as time passes and the situation changes, so must the strategy."

As a general principle, a standing state of war can be justified for several reasons. It might be the only way to concentrate the nation's resources where they are needed. It might explain why people are being inconvenienced or asked to sacrifice. It might symbolize that the entire nation's effort is directed toward one goal.



Prisoners at Guantánamo

But none of those applies to modern America in its effort to defend itself against terrorist attack. The federal budget reveals no discipline at all about resources: the spending for antiterrorism activities has gone up, but so has the spending for nearly everything else. There is no expectation that Americans in general will share the inconveniences and sacrifice of the 1 percent of the population in uniform (going through airport screening lines does not count). Occasional speeches about the transcendent importance of the "long war" can't conceal the many other goals that day by day take political precedence.

And while a standing state of war no longer offers any advantages for the United States, it creates several problems. It cheapens the concept of war, making the word a synonym for *effort* or *goal*. It predisposes us toward overreactions, of the kind that have already proved so harmful. The detentions at Guantánamo Bay were justified as a wartime emergency. But unlike Abraham Lincoln's declaration of martial law, they have no natural end point.

A state of war encourages a state of fear. "The War on Terror does not reduce public anxieties by thwarting terrorists

poised to strike," writes Ian Lustick, of the University of Pennsylvania, in his forthcoming book, *Trapped in the War on Terror*. "Rather, in myriad ways, conducting the antiterror effort as a 'war' fuels those anxieties." John Mueller writes in his book that because "the creation of insecurity, fear, anxiety, hysteria, and overreaction is central for terrorists," they can be defeated simply by a refusal to overreact. This approach is harder in time of war.

A state of war also predisposes the United States to think about using its assets in a strictly warlike way—and to give short shrift to the vast range of their other possibilities. The U.S. military has been responsible for the most dramatic recent improvement in American standing in the Islamic world. Immediately after the invasion of Iraq, the proportion of Indonesians with a favorable view of the United States had fallen to 15 percent, according to the Pew Global Attitudes Survey. After American troops brought ships, cargo planes, and helicopters loaded with supplies for tsunami victims, the overall Indonesian attitude toward the United States was

gives dispersed terrorist groups a unity they might not have on their own. Last year, in a widely circulated paper for the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, David Kilcullen argued that Islamic extremists from around the world yearn to constitute themselves as a global jihad. Therefore, he said, Western countries should do everything possible to treat terrorist groups individually, rather than "lumping together all terrorism, all rogue or failed states, and all strategic competitors who might potentially oppose U.S. objectives." The friend-or-foe categorization of war makes lumping together more likely.

The United States can declare victory by saying that what is controllable has been controlled: Al-Qaeda Central has been broken up. Then the country can move to its real work. It will happen on three levels: domestic protection, worldwide harassment and pursuit of al-Qaeda, and an all-fronts diplomatic campaign.

Domestically, a sustainable post-victory policy would mean shifting from the early, panicky "Code Orange" days, in which everything was threatened and any investment in

Americans still face dangers, as they always have. They have recently lacked leaders to help keep the dangers in perspective.

still negative, but some 79 percent of Indonesians said that their opinion of America had improved because of the relief effort. There was a similar turnaround in Pakistan after U.S. troops helped feed and rescue villagers affected by a major earthquake. But in most of the Muslim world, the image of American troops is that of soldiers or marines manning counterinsurgency patrols, not delivering food and water. "The diplomatic component of the war on terror has been neglected so long, it's practically vestigial," a Marine officer told me. "It needs to be regrown." But in time of war, the balance is harder to correct.

Perhaps worst of all, an open-ended war is an open-ended invitation to defeat. *Sometime* there will be more bombings, shootings, poisonings, and other disruptions in the United States. They will happen in the future because they have happened in the past (Oklahoma City; the Unabomber; the Tylenol poisonings; the Washington, D.C.-area snipers; the still-unsolved anthrax mailings; the countless shootings at schools; and so on). These previous episodes were not caused by Islamic extremists; future ones may well be. In all cases they represent a failure of the government to protect its people. But if they occur while the war is still on, they are enemy "victories," not misfortunes of the sort that great nations suffer. They are also powerful provocations to another round of hasty reactions.

War implies emergency, and the upshot of most of what I heard was that the United States needs to shift its operations to a long-term, nonemergency basis. "De-escalation of the rhetoric is the first step," John Robb told me. "It is hard for insurgents to handle de-escalation." War encourages a simple classification of the world into ally or enemy. This polarization

"security" was justified, to a more practical and triage-minded approach. Four analysts—Mueller, of Ohio State; Lustick, of the University of Pennsylvania; plus Veronique de Rugy, of the American Enterprise Institute; and Benjamin Friedman, of MIT—have written extensively about the mindlessness and perverse effects of much homeland-security spending. In most cases, they argue, money dabbled out for a security fence here and a screening machine there would be far better spent on robust emergency-response systems. No matter how much they spend, state and federal authorities cannot possibly protect every place from every threat. But they could come close to ensuring that if things were to go wrong, relief and repair would be there fast.

Internationally, the effort to pin down bin Laden—to listen to his conversations, keep him off balance, and prevent him from re-forming an organization—has been successful. It must continue. And the international cooperation on which it depends will be easier in the absence of wartime language and friction. The effort to contain the one true existential threat to the United States—that of "loose nukes"—will also be eased by smoother relations with other countries.

Militarily, the United States has been stuck in an awkward middle ground concerning the need for "transformation." Donald Rumsfeld's insistence that the Army, in particular, rely on technology to become leaner and more "efficient" led to steady reductions in the planned size of the ground force that invaded and occupied Iraq. By most accounts, Rumsfeld went too far with that pressure—but not far enough in changing the largest patterns of Pentagon spending. This year's *Quadrennial Defense Review*, which is supposed to represent a bottom-up effort to rethink America's defense needs, says

that the nation needs to prepare for a new era of fighting terrorists and insurgents (plus China)—and then offers programs and weapons very much the same as when the enemy was the Soviet Union. “The United States is still trying to use its familiar old instruments against new opponents,” says Martin van Creveld, who calls Iraq a “totally unnecessary war.” “It was the right army to beat Saddam Hussein,” he says, “but the wrong one to occupy the country or deal with Osama bin Laden.” Most counterterrorism authorities say that a transformation is also needed in the nation’s spy agencies, starting with a much greater emphasis on language training and agents who develop long-term regional expertise in Muslim-dominated parts of the world.

Diplomatically, the United States can use the combination of “hard” and “soft” assets that constitute its unique strength to show a face that will again attract the world. “The only answer to a regime that wages total cold war is to wage total peace.” So said Dwight Eisenhower in his State of the Union address in 1958, four months after *Sputnik* was launched. He added, “This means bringing to bear every asset of our personal and national lives upon the task of building the conditions in which security and peace can grow.” A similar policy would allow the modern United States to use its diplomatic, economic, intellectual, and military means to reduce the long-term sources of terrorist rage.

America’s range of strengths is, if anything, greater than when Eisenhower spoke nearly fifty years ago. The domestic population is more ethnically varied and accepting of outsiders. The university establishment is much larger. The leading companies are more fully integrated into local societies around the world. The nation has more numerous, better-funded, and more broadly experienced charitable foundations. It is much richer in every way. With the passing of the nuclear showdown against the Soviet Union, the country is safer than it was under Eisenhower. We should be able to “wage total peace” more effectively.

Americans still face dangers, as they always have. They have recently lacked leaders to help keep the dangers in perspective. Shaping public awareness—what we mean by “leading”—is what we most remember in our strong presidents: Lincoln’s tone as the Civil War came on and as it neared its end; Theodore Roosevelt taking the first real steps toward environmental conservation and coming to terms with new industrial organizations; Franklin Roosevelt in the Depression and the Second World War; Eisenhower managing the showdown with the Soviet Union, but also overseeing the steady expansion of America’s transportation, scientific, and educational systems; Kennedy with the race to the moon; and on up to George W. Bush, with his calm focus in the months immediately after 9/11. One of the signals Bush sent in those first days may have had the greatest strategic importance in the long run. That was his immediate insistence that America’s Muslims were not the enemy, that they should not be singled out, that they should be seen as part of the nation’s solution rather than part of its problem. It is easy to imagine that a different tone would have had damaging repercussions.

Now we could use a leader to help us understand victory and its consequences. We are ready for a message like this one:

My fellow Americans, we have achieved something almost no one thought possible five years ago. The nation did not suffer the quick follow-up attacks so many people feared and expected. Our troops found the people who were responsible for the worst attack ever on our soil. We killed many, we captured more, and we placed their leaders in a position where they could not direct the next despicable attack on our people—and where the conscience of the world’s people, of whatever faith, has turned against them for their barbarism. They have been a shame to their own great faith, and to all other historic standards of decency.

Achieving this victory does not mean the end of threats. Life is never free of dangers. I wish I could tell you that no American will ever again be killed or wounded by a terrorist—and that no other person on this earth will be either. But I cannot say that, and you could not believe me if I did. Life brings risk—especially life in an open society, like the one that people of this land have sacrificed for centuries to create.

We have achieved a great victory, and for that we can give thanks—above all to our troops. We will be at our best if we do not let fear paralyze or obsess us. We will be at our best if we instead optimistically and enthusiastically begin the next chapter in our nation’s growth. We will deal with the struggles of our time. These include coping with terrorism, but also recognizing the huge shifts in power and resulting possibilities in Asia, in Latin America, in many other parts of the world. We will recognize the challenges of including the people left behind in the process of global development—people in the Middle East, in Africa, even in developed countries like our own. The world’s scientists have never before had so much to offer, so fast—and humanity has never needed their discoveries more than we do now, to preserve the world’s environment, to develop new sources of energy, to improve the quality of people’s lives in every corner of the globe, to contain the threats that modern weaponry can put into the hands of individuals or small groups.

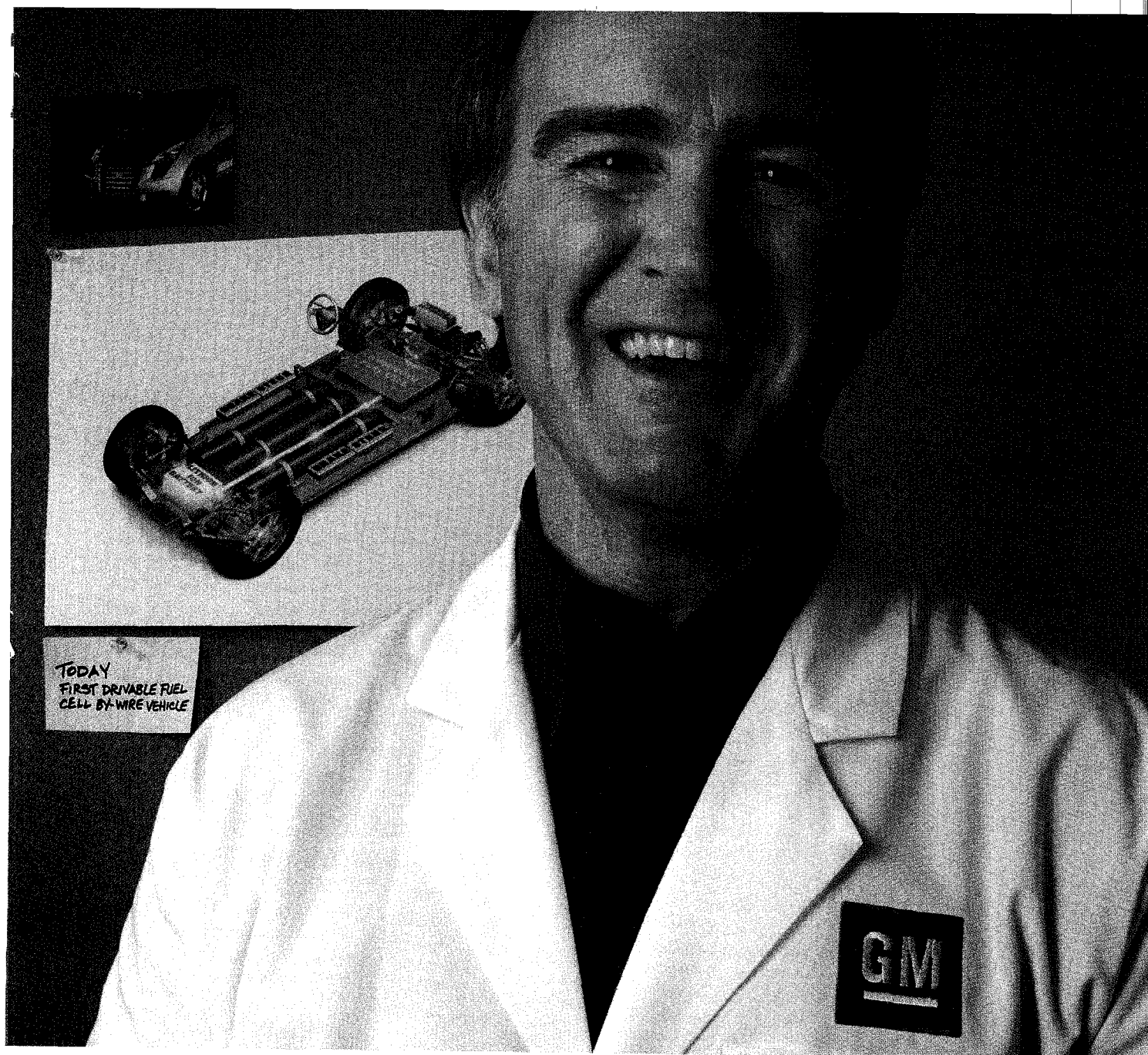
The great organizing challenge of our time includes coping with the threat of bombings and with the political extremism that lies behind it. That is one part of this era’s duty. But it is not the entirety. History will judge us on our ability to deal with the full range of this era’s challenges—and opportunities. With quiet pride, we recognize the victory we have won. And with the determination that has marked us through our nation’s history, we continue the pursuit of our American mission, undeterred by the perils that we will face.

Different leaders will choose different words. But the message—of realism, of courage, and of optimism despite life’s difficulties—is one we need to hear. ■



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A history in sketches

All the Presidents' Doodles

After Somali militiamen killed eighteen U.S. soldiers in October 1993, President Clinton convened his national-security team. He sat silently while being briefed. Then, his aide Richard Clarke recalled, "When they had talked themselves out, Clinton stopped doodling and looked up. 'Okay, here's what we're going to do.'"

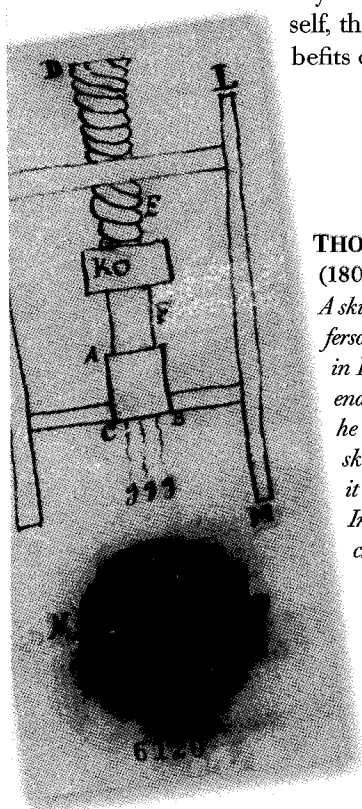
We imagine White House meetings to be efficient and focused on grave matters; we don't imagine the president dithering, daydreaming, or making idle scribbles—especially during moments of national crisis. But presidents, like the rest of us, doodle. Dwight Eisenhower drew sturdy, 1950s images: tables, pencils, nuclear weapons. A Herbert Hoover scrawl provided the pattern for a line of rompers. Ronald Reagan dispensed cheery cartoons to aides. John F. Kennedy reportedly doodled the word *poverty* at the last cabinet meeting before his death.

In an age of politics as scripted spectacle, these doodles, made without speechwriters or focus groups, promise a glimpse of the ungarded president. Because their meaning may be opaque even to the doodler himself, they invite us to interpret them—as befits our democracy—as we wish.



ANDREW JACKSON (1829–1837)

Jackson was the first president to leave behind full-fledged doodles from his time in office. This drawing dates from 1833. Although Jackson's immediate predecessor, John Quincy Adams, had kept a pet alligator in the White House, the animal was more commonly associated with Jackson's military exploits. An 1828 campaign song, "The Hunters of Kentucky," celebrated Jackson's heroics at the Battle of New Orleans, in 1815, noting that in his brigade, "Every man was half a horse / And half an alligator."



THOMAS JEFFERSON (1801–1809)

A skilled draftsman and architect, Jefferson was also a noted epicure. While in Europe in the 1780s, he became enamored of pasta—so much so that he stuck a feather in his inkwell, sketched out a design, and called it a "maccaroni"-making machine. In 1802, he served macaroni and cheese in the White House.



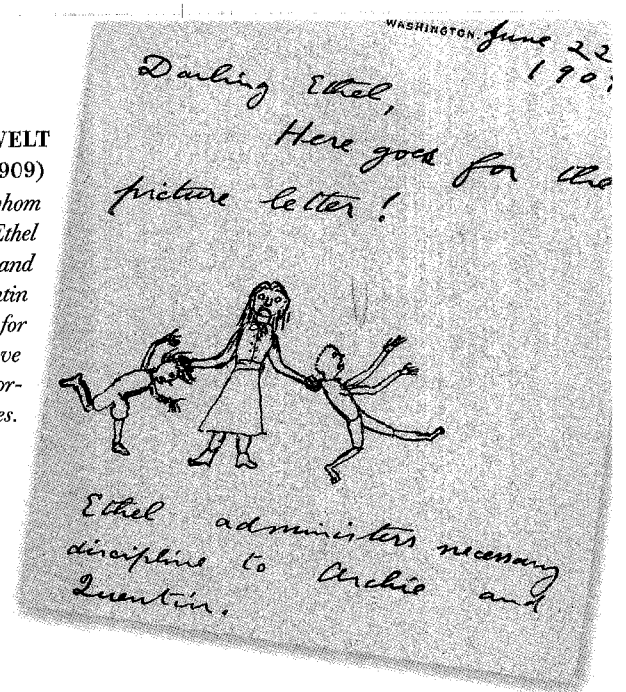
RUTHERFORD B. HAYES (1877–1881)

Hayes drew this woman's face in his "Diary of a Deferred Wedding Journey," recounting the details of a holiday he took with his wife, Lucy Webb, eight years after their 1852 marriage.

Adapted from Presidential Doodles: Two Centuries of Scribbles, Scratches, Squiggles and Scrawls From the Oval Office, from the creators of Cabinet Magazine, to be published this month by Basic Books. Text by David Greenberg, a professor at Rutgers University and the author of Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image.

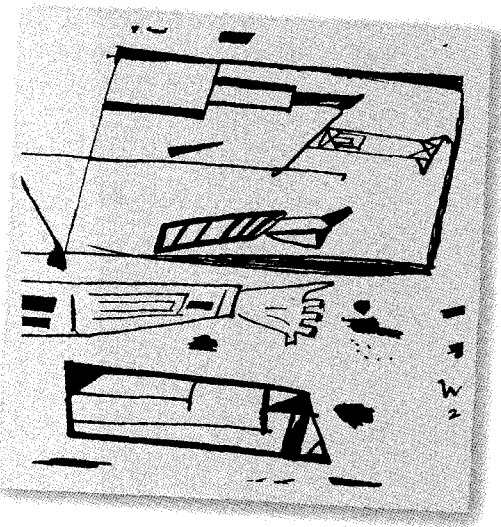
THEODORE ROOSEVELT
(1901-1909)

Roosevelt's boisterous brood of six, to whom he often wrote "picture letters," included Ethel (ten years old in 1901), Archie (seven), and the youngest of the Roosevelt litter, Quentin (four). The boys developed a reputation for mischief. On one occasion, Quentin drove his toy wagon through a full-length portrait of First Lady Lucy Webb Hayes. TR was more often amused than angry.



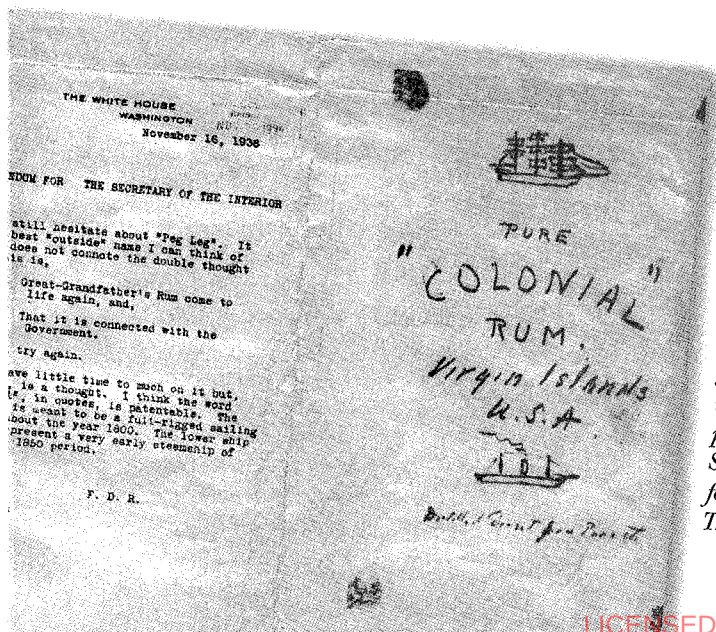
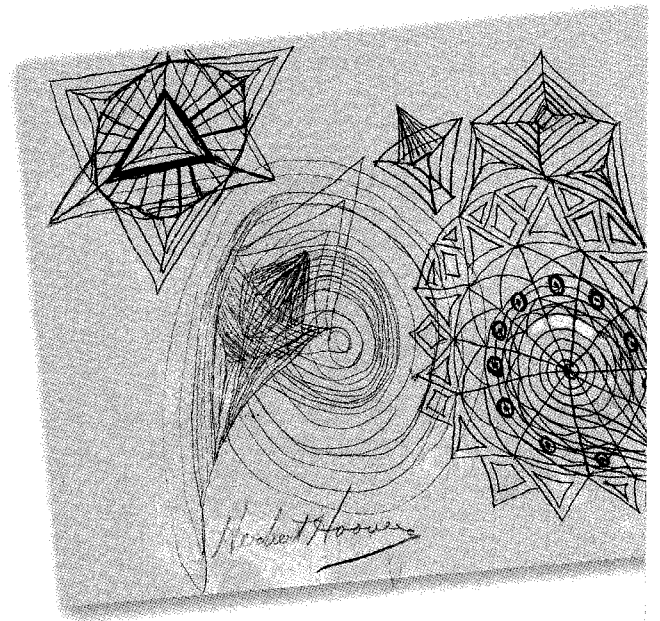
WARREN G. HARDING
(1921-1923)

Harding is considered one of the worst presidents in American history. The Teapot Dome scandal stood as the benchmark for presidential sleaze until Watergate. But during his presidency he was seen as a handsome, grand-living embodiment of the Roaring Twenties—an image reflected in the energetic Art Deco aesthetic of his doodles.



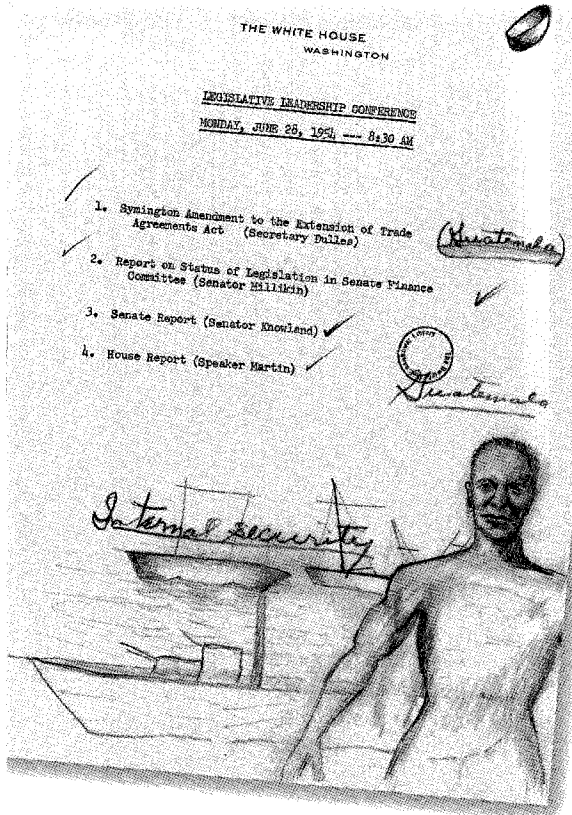
HERBERT HOOVER
(1929-1933)

Trained as an engineer, Hoover was one of the most prolific presidential doodlers. His pictures are consistently geometric, intricate, and clever in the way they link disparate parts into a larger whole. But while his doodles hinted at elaborate and expansive visions, they never included any people. This failure to take human beings into account was all too evident in his slow reaction to the Great Depression.



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
(1933-1945)

FDR's drawings as president were mostly related to his hobbies: genealogy, stamp collecting, ships, and fishing. After Prohibition was repealed, in 1933, the Department of the Interior established a company to promote economic development in the Virgin Islands. Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes was tasked with choosing a name and a label for the company's rum. He proposed "Peg Leg Rum," but FDR balked. They ultimately chose a blander name: "Government House."

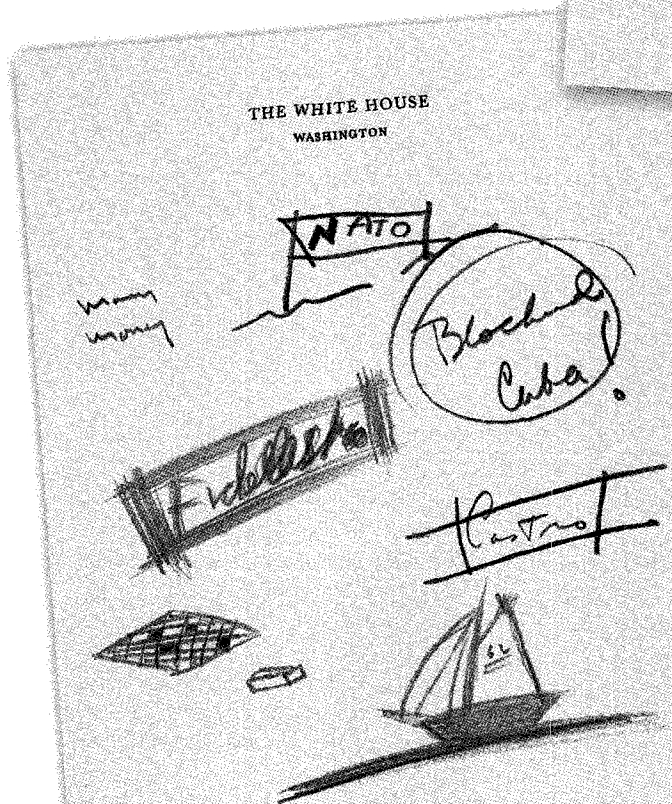
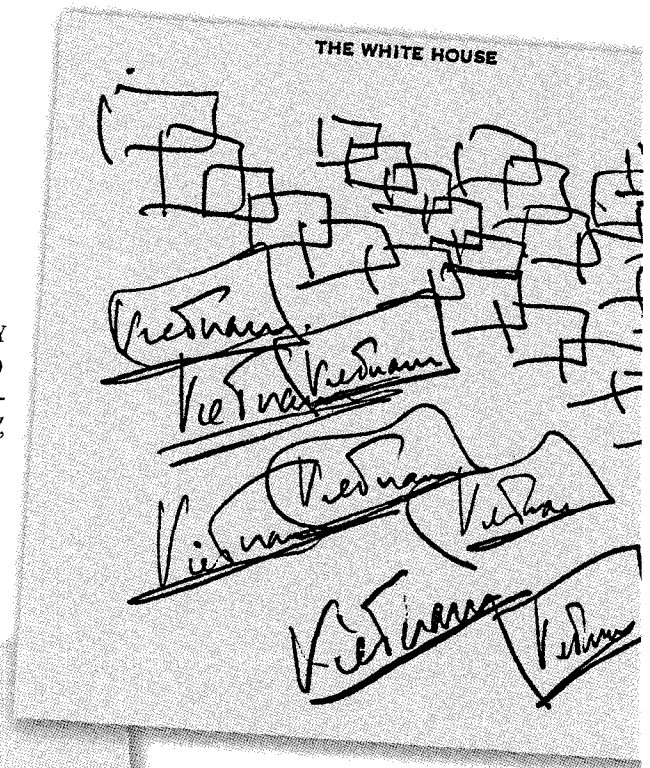


DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (1953–1961)

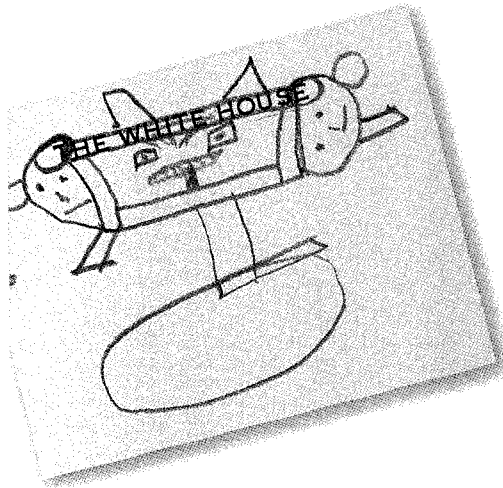
More than any other president, Eisenhower doodled on agendas, memos, and other official documents. This agenda, from June 28, 1954, didn't list the crisis in Guatemala as an item for discussion, but Eisenhower did. The day before, CIA-backed forces had deposed the government of Jacobo Arbenz in favor of a regime that was more pro-American (or at least more pro-United Fruit Company). With Guatemala clearly on his mind, the president sketched himself as a trim young man with big gunboats backing him up—a strong leader restoring order to the strife-torn Latin nation.

JOHN F. KENNEDY (1961–1963)

Where Hoover's doodles are abstract and geometric and Eisenhower's concrete and pictorial, Kennedy's are heavily textual—reflecting his verbal, cerebral nature. He often repeats a word or phrase and sets each one in its own box. In some doodles, Kennedy writes one or two or three words over and over, in a tense, almost obsessive repetition—as if he were trying to work through whatever anxiety was confronting him. Although one should attempt presidential mind reading with the utmost caution, it seems safe to say that in this doodle JFK was concerned about Vietnam.



Kennedy drew this doodle during the height of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. He ordered a naval blockade of the island nation, but the vessel he drew here—probably the *Victura*, his personal sailboat, which he drew often—played no role in the quarantine.



LYNDON B. JOHNSON

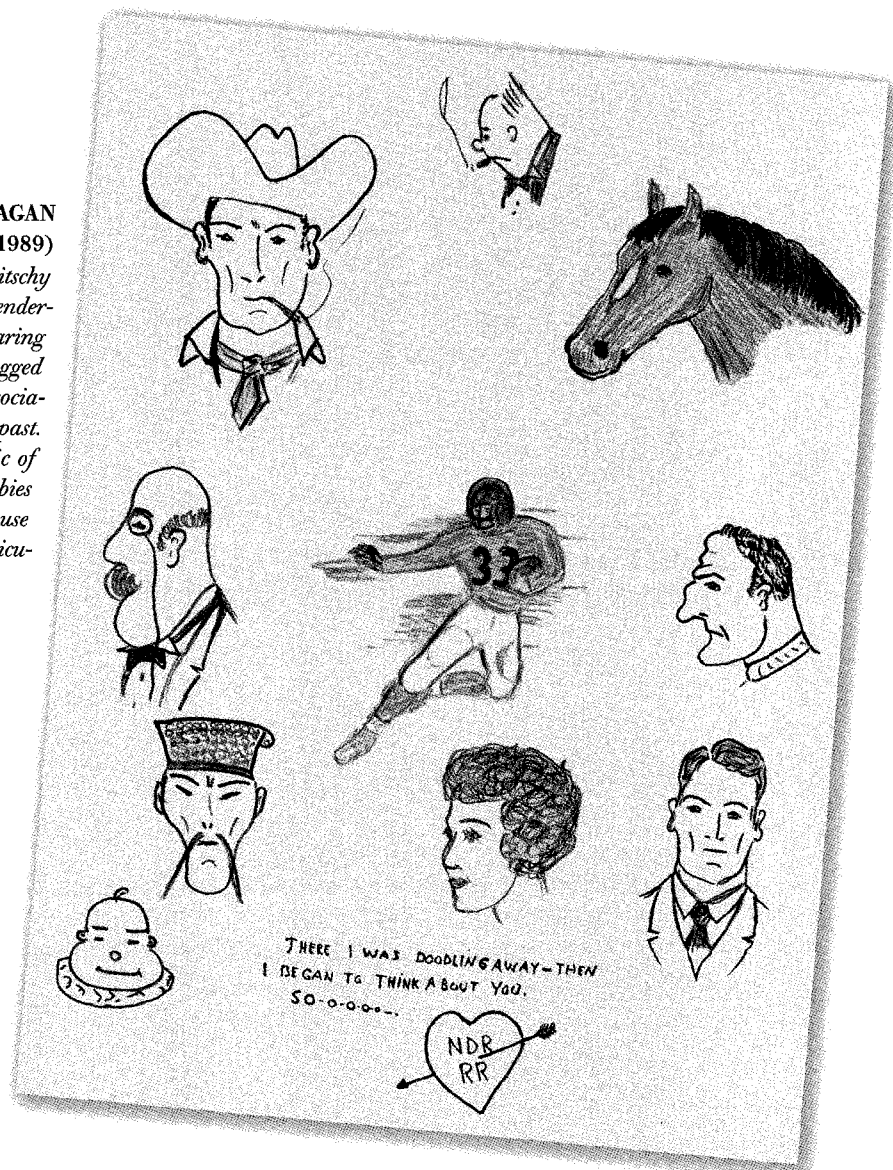
(1963–1969)

Johnson's White House may well have been the most dedicated to doodle collecting. After each meeting, an aide would round up whatever notes were left, even if they had been crumpled or ripped up. Here the president shows his predilection for drawing figures with three faces. The drawing also reveals his habit of building his doodles around the words 'The White House' on his stationery. At various times Johnson turned his residence into a flag, a pagoda, and a prison.

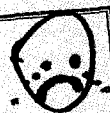
RONALD REAGAN

(1981–1989)

Like his folksy stories, Reagan's kitschy doodles—most of them cartoon renderings of himself as a bandana-wearing cowboy, a running back, or a rugged leading man—trigger warm associations with an idyllic American past. Many reveal a distinct aesthetic of cuteness. Reagan liked to draw babies and horses and was not afraid to use gooey terms of endearment—particularly when writing to Nancy.



GEORGE BUSH



Rose

- 1 confirmed dead
- 1 possible dead

How bout all
the rest? Any
more dead ones?

GEORGE H. W. BUSH

(1989–1993)

The one significant drawing—a sad, tearful face—currently available in Bush's presidential papers appears on a memo he wrote to Rose Zamaria, his secretary. According to Zamaria, the president was responding to her request that he sign a stack of letters—part of a mass mailing—addressed to people he knew. Looking over the names, Bush realized that one intended recipient was dead and another might be. "You see," explained Zamaria, "he was such a funny guy."



Tim Bolton is making a difference for amputees in need. His nonprofit refurbishes used artificial limbs and distributes them all over the world. And as a Ph.D. candidate in Psychology at Walden, he's studying new therapies for the treatment of phantom limb pain. Learn more at WaldenU.edu.

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it's giving them
hope."**

- Tim Bolton,
Walden Ph.D. in Psychology student

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*In trailers just minutes away from the slot machines,
Air Force pilots control Predators over Iraq and Afghanistan.
A case study in the marvels—and limits—of modern military technology*

BY ROBERT D. KAPLAN

Hunting the Taliban in Las Vegas

To embed on some of the niftiest air missions over Iraq and Afghanistan, I had to fly to Las Vegas. I drove out of town past the MGM Grand, the Bellagio, and Caesar's Palace and checked in at a low-end hotel-casino complex in Las Vegas for \$59 a night. It was crowded with obese people in sweat suits and seniors driving motorized wheelchairs, yanking one-armed bandits in a masturbatory frenzy, and smelling of whiskey, cigarettes, and popcorn. Ten minutes away, at Nellis Air Force Base, I found a cluster of camouflaged trailers.

"Inside that trailer is Iraq; inside the other, Afghanistan," explained Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Plamp, of Louisville, Kentucky. "Either way, you go in there and you enter the CENTCOM AOR [Area of Responsibility]."

That is, inside those trailers you leave North America, which falls under Northern Command, and enter the Middle East, the domain of Central Command. So much for the tyranny of geography.

The MQ-1B Predator drone, or the "Pred," as its crews call it, is flown from here. Underground

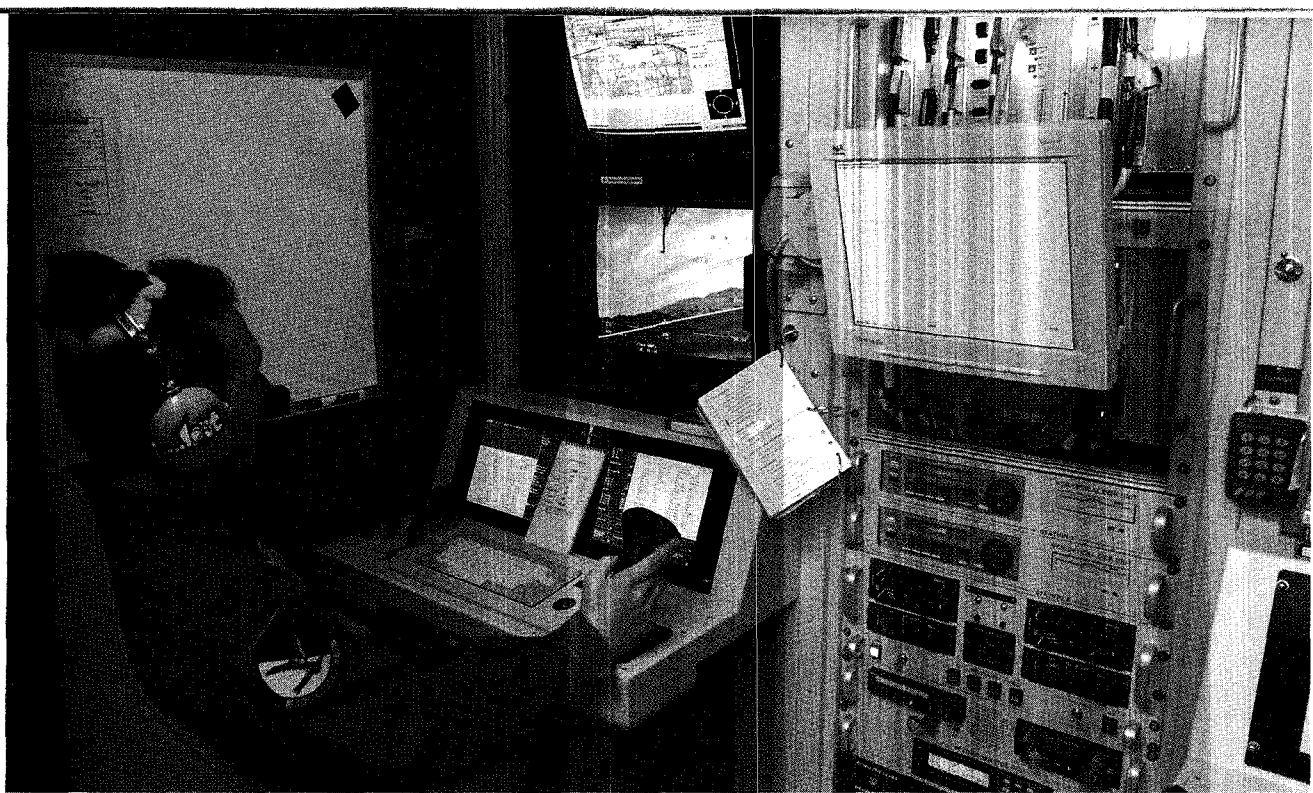
and underwater fiber-optic cables link these trailers—ground-control stations, really—to Europe, where a satellite dish makes the connection directly to every Predator in the air over Baghdad, and along the Afghan-Pakistani border, and wherever else they are needed. Local airfields get them into the air, then Las Vegas takes over.

The Predator is the most famous of several dozen UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) that the military operates. It was first deployed in the 1990s in the Balkans, but made its bones in November 2002 in Yemen, when a Predator-fired AGM-114P armor-piercing Hellfire missile incinerated a car in which an al-Qaeda leader, Abu Ali al-Harithi, was traveling with five others through the desert. And a Predator tracked Iraqi insurgency leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi during the last days of his life.

Most people, when they hear of an unmanned drone, probably picture a model airplane. Actually, the Predator looks like a big glider. With its twenty-seven-foot length and an almost fifty-foot wingspan, it is comparable in size to

Robert D. Kaplan is a national correspondent for The Atlantic. His most recent book is Imperial Grunts, published in paperback this month by Vintage.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY U.S. AIR FORCE/STAFF SGT. JEREMY T. LOCK



A pilot at Nellis Air Force Base, in Las Vegas, maneuvers a Predator in a mission on the other side of the globe.

a Cessna Skyhawk. Because the Predator's outer skin is made of composites that contain almost no metal, it weighs only 1,130 pounds without fuel or bombs, and it can stay aloft for twenty-four hours on its four-cylinder engine. It is so light that I was able to lift the tail of a training model off the ground with one arm. Requiring no life support for a pilot and no redundant safety systems, it costs only \$4.2 million: for the price of one F-22, you can build more than forty Predators. One-quarter of that \$4.2 million is spent on "the ball," a rotating sphere on the plane's belly, where the optics, lasers, and video cameras are housed.

But the most impressive thing about the Predator is that it flies slow. That's right, in counterinsurgency operations, where the goal is to hunt and kill individuals or small groups of fighters—rather than to attack mass infantry formations—the slower a plane flies, the better. Also, the slower it flies, the less wear and tear it sustains, which is why the Predator needs less maintenance than many other aircraft.

Slow-flying manned planes like the A-10 and the AC-130 have been particularly useful in places like Fallujah. Because these planes can hover over complex urban battle spaces, their pilots have "situational awareness"—they can see and understand the local facts on the ground—and are therefore trusted by Marine platoon commanders and Special Forces team sergeants engaged in tactical operations. But while those manned planes still must fly at 180 knots, the unmanned Predator can remain airborne at a mere 75 knots. And while many other UAVs have to fly low, drawing attention with their trademark lawn-mower or snowmobile sound, a Predator flies at 15,000 feet—almost three miles up—where no one on the ground can hear it or see it. Picture a satellite that does not need to remain in a fixed orbit, and is armed with two Hellfire missiles.

I've been traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan for a quarter century, and yet some of the most illuminating moments I've experienced in those countries occurred here in Las Vegas. Each day began with a pilots' briefing, no different from those I've attended with Air Force pilots elsewhere, with a similar nervous edge to it. To wit, the brief began with "Motherhood"—that is, the idiot-proof basics. Then came an intelligence backgrounder, followed by a detailed weather report (for Iraq and Afghanistan, not Nevada), and concluding with the "Brevity," or code words for the day. The wall clocks focused on three time zones: Iraq's, Afghanistan's, and Zulu. (Zulu Time, or Z Time, is Greenwich Mean Time not adjusted to daylight saving time; the U.S. military uses Z Time worldwide to prevent confusion.)

Those who "fly" Predators are indeed pilots, not operators, even though they don't have to leave the ground. They wear flight suits. Each is a veteran of an A-10, an F-15, a B-1 bomber, a B-52, or any of a host of other aerial platforms. The scrappy, lumbering, low-tech A-10 Warthog may give pilots the best preparation for flying the high-tech Pred. Both Warthogs and Predators are about hitting small targets and gunning down individuals in confined spaces. "If you want to pull the trigger and take out bad guys, you fly a Predator," one Pred pilot told me.

Air Force pilots usually work in twenty-month cycles—sixteen months of training followed by four months on deployment. Here, it's twenty months of combat. The fact that pilots need no new training means enormous savings for the taxpayer. For the pilots, the grueling long combat cycle affords enough time to build up high levels of visual familiarity and expertise. Predator pilots know the telltale signs of an IED (Improvised Explosive Device), they can read the wadis (dry riverbeds) and other egresses, and they recognize the entrances to the

NEILS AFB PHOTO LAB

mud-walled compounds and the look of the Afghan “jingle” trucks (the colorfully decorated trucks one sees all over the Indian subcontinent and its environs). They talk to troops on the ground throughout the day and can offer them advice.

Yet despite their part in directing warfare, Predator pilots face absolutely no danger. In fact, as one pilot told me, the Predator raises a moral issue, by enabling you to kill someone without ever putting yourself at risk. Inside the trailers, crews don’t get even the sensation of flying that one gets in a flight simulator. The real tension for these pilots comes from the clash with everything outside the trailers.

Nellis Air Force Base is full of the same stuffy regulations—on driving, dress codes, inspections, saluting, and so forth—that are common to other bases far removed from war zones. (In war zones—inside those trailers—informality reigns because *the mission is everything*.) But beyond Nellis is the banal world of spouses, kids, homework, and soccer games—not to mention the absurdity of a city where even the gas stations have slot machines. Simply entering or leaving one of the trailers is tremendously disorienting.

In preparing to embed with Predator pilots, I obtained a “secret” clearance, but not a “top-secret” one. Thus, I was barred from the best or “high-side” missions, and had to settle for the “low-side” ones. The first trailer I went into was working in Afghanistan. I felt as if I was back in a submarine, where I had spent several weeks the year before. There were grim, colorless computer bays in freezing, pulsing darkness—a three-dimensional world of flashing digits from light-emitting diodes. Like sub drivers, Pred pilots fly blind, using only the visual depiction of their location on a map and math—numerical readouts indicating latitude, longitude, height, wind speeds, ground elevation, nearby planes, and so forth. The camera in the rotating ball focuses only on the object under surveillance. The crew’s situational awareness is restricted to the enemy on the ground. Much of the time during a stakeout, the Pred flies a preprogrammed hexagon, racetrack, bow tie, or some other circular-type holding pattern.

Each trailer holds a two-person crew: a pilot and a “sensor,” who operates the ball. Both face half a dozen computer screens, including map displays and close-up shots of the object under surveillance. As in any plane, the pilot uses a flight stick with various buttons. Though it was nighttime in Afghanistan, two small mud-walled compounds near Kandahar were easily visible thanks to infrared sensors, which rendered the image on the pilot’s screen in the darker and lighter tones of a photographic negative.

Nevertheless, the screens swept me back into a familiar world: of dramatic, wind-carved hillsides terraced with fields of rice, alfalfa, and cannabis, and sectioned by poplar trees on raised banks; and of courtyarded compounds where, in the intense heat and dust of late spring in southern Afghanistan, people sleep on roofs under magnificent starscapes. The alley between these two compounds, I knew from experience, would be just wide enough for a pickup truck.

The pilot and sensor were waiting for a vehicle to emerge, which they would then follow. At least, that’s what

the “customer” had told them. The customer, in this case, was the Canadian military, which now has a significant presence in southern Afghanistan. Because the Predator is in such demand, its crews take for granted that every mission assigned is important. Often, the more high-value the target, the duller the aerial stakeout: the top echelons of al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or the Iraqi insurgents are the most likely to practice good operational security (or OPSEC), and thus go to extreme lengths not to be observed. Predators can go days watching one compound where nothing seems to be happening. This vigil was like going on a reconnaissance mission with a sniper unit, except that the boredom here was not worsened by heat or cold or the need to hide behind a rock.

Of the two keyboards in front of the pilot, the one he used most was the chat keyboard. He was writing messages to others involved in the mission, while talking into his mouthpiece to the JTAC (Joint Terminal Air Controller), usually a staff sergeant near the site under surveillance.

I’ve been traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan for decades, but some of the most illuminating moments I’ve experienced in those countries occurred in Las Vegas.

The Pred that was now watching the two compounds had only one remaining Hellfire missile. The other had been fired some hours earlier, taking out a nearby vehicle that turned out to be loaded with explosives; the immense blast had filled the screen.

The pilot beside me remarked, “Sometimes you get spun up, you fly to a site, you wait for the A-10s to arrive on scene, ready for a kill. Then the whole thing gets called off, and you wind up watching a house for hours, and all you see is a guy walk into the courtyard at night to take a crap, registered by the heat signature picked up on the ground after he gets up from his squat.”

I walked into the trailer next door and entered Iraq. An African American woman—an Army brat from Texas—was operating the ball over a big oil complex west of Kirkuk. Insurgents were thought to be laying IEDs or larger bombs inside it during the night. She saw three suspicious trucks and zoomed in. But there was no heat signature, so she knew that the vehicles had been there for many hours without using their engines, and she rotated the ball elsewhere. As she explained to me, the heat signature allows you a view back in time several hours—information that a good sensor can use to establish a narrative.

Yet the real value of UAVs is something that is still developing, and that hardly anyone outside the military has noticed: these assets are merging with, and thus expanding, the tactics

of bread-and-butter elements like Marine infantry platoons and A-10 attack planes. With more and smaller UAVs, platoons will be able to see behind enemy lines and consequently find safer ways to defeat an ambush rather than charge directly into it. Because the Predator can “sparkle” a target at night—mark it in infrared so that A-10 pilots and grunts on the ground can see it with their night-vision goggles—it opens up a range of options that pilots and infantry never had before.

Keep in mind that CAS (Close Air Support), in which a Special Forces team on the ground can call in an air strike on a target only a hundred yards away, can merge twenty-first-century technology with nineteenth-century-style units. CAS was a breakthrough tactic crucial to toppling the Taliban regime in late 2001, when the Green Berets moved around Afghanistan on horseback. A video of a Hellfire attack that had occurred several days before I arrived demonstrated another way of combining the new Predator technology with old-fashioned tactics. Some Army helicopters had been brought in to fly menacingly over a building in eastern Afghanistan: nothing fancy. About a dozen Taliban escaped into a field—which was exactly what U.S. forces had been looking for. The helicopter visit was a feint, designed to flush the Taliban out into the open, where the missile from the Predator killed them without the collateral damage that would have ensued had the building been fired on.

Future Predators will be able to deliver bigger and heavier ordnance than the Hellfire, and to fly higher—above the weather, at 30,000 feet. But the Predator, especially as it is improved, may also interfere with decision making. As one pilot told me: “No general will want to attack something without visual confirmation from a Predator. It’s the old story—by the time you have all the evidence, it’s too late to affect the outcome.” Rather than expanding the opportunities for operations, the Predator could end up restricting them, even as we fight enemies who have no compunction about waging total war.

In fact, the more missions I watched, the more I realized what the Predator could not do. The Pred can fill only a small part of the gap resulting from our abysmal shortage of human intelligence. One nighttime mission (it was morning in Las Vegas) provided a telling case in point.

We were flying (virtually, that is) over Sangin, northwest of Kandahar. The pilot was given the GPS coordinates for the town hall, supposedly besieged by 450 Taliban. A B-1 Lancer, the heaviest and highest-tech bomber in the Air Force arsenal (save for the B-2 Spirit), was about to do a flyover as a show of force. But the Pred pilot saw nothing “except a few guys on the roof chilling out” in what we knew from the instruments was almost 100-degree heat, though it was near midnight there. “We’re seeing life, just not seeing anything unusual,” the sensor reported. “You sure you got the right grids?” He then moved the camera to observe the police station nearby. Still nothing.

The pilot spoke through his headset: “This is crazy—450 Taliban! Are you high or something? And they’re sending in a B-1. To impress whom? These dudes chilling on the roof?”

Watching the three robed figures moving on the roof, I could imagine the scene: the heat, the tea they were likely brewing, the desultory chitchat. And here we were, about half a dozen people—the JTAC, the pilot and sensor in the trailer, the image specialists in Qatar and at Langley Air Force Base in Norfolk, Virginia—talking to one another using the latest and greatest technology, and yet no one seemed to know what was going on. It was likely that the very number of people with electronic access further confused the mission. Circles were being run around them by guys with turbans and AK-47s, who could melt into the landscape.

Scanning the area, the Pred still found nothing. Then we were ordered to another detail: provide force protection for a convoy of jingle trucks delivering food and supplies, just to the west of Kandahar. We did that for a bit, inspecting the wadi egresses where an ambush might be laid and checking ruts in the road ahead that might be IEDs. Finally we were told to search for a specific “g-truck” (no one in Las Vegas knew what that meant); that led the Predator to a line of trees that seemed to be concealing a number of trucks. But it was impossible to know what, or who, was inside them, or what their drivers intended.

I had had days like this, embedded with Green Berets in the same area near Kandahar. Such days always ended with sergeants muttering, “Nobody knows what the fuck’s going on.”

“Yeah,” said Lieutenant Colonel Plamp, as we spoke in Las Vegas. “We’re in the thick of these ground missions, and as a result we’re just as confused as anyone sometimes. It’s the typical fog of war.” ▀

LITTLE HAT

Forty years in a round box, a nest of tissue paper,
magenta velvet toque, your tasteful feather
a moiré of navy and green, your finely knotted veil
folded and draped just so, little hat, you were more
the idea of hat than hat—actual, functional—
your function to wait in the box for occasion,
your emergence to confirm occasion
for anyone who would notice your lustrous silk-velvet,
your grosgrain hatband with its two gold-toothed combs.
Little hat, how is it possible there was ever such skill,
such time? How, in those years, that century, did you
exact such care? Little hat, satin lining, lingering
scent of lavender, what if there was ever only so much
tenderness in the world, if there is so much tenderness
but no more? What if there is no tenderness to spare,
not one thread, one stitch?

—SUZANNE CLEARY

Suzanne Cleary is the author of Keeping Time (2002). Her new collection, Trick Pear, will be published next year.



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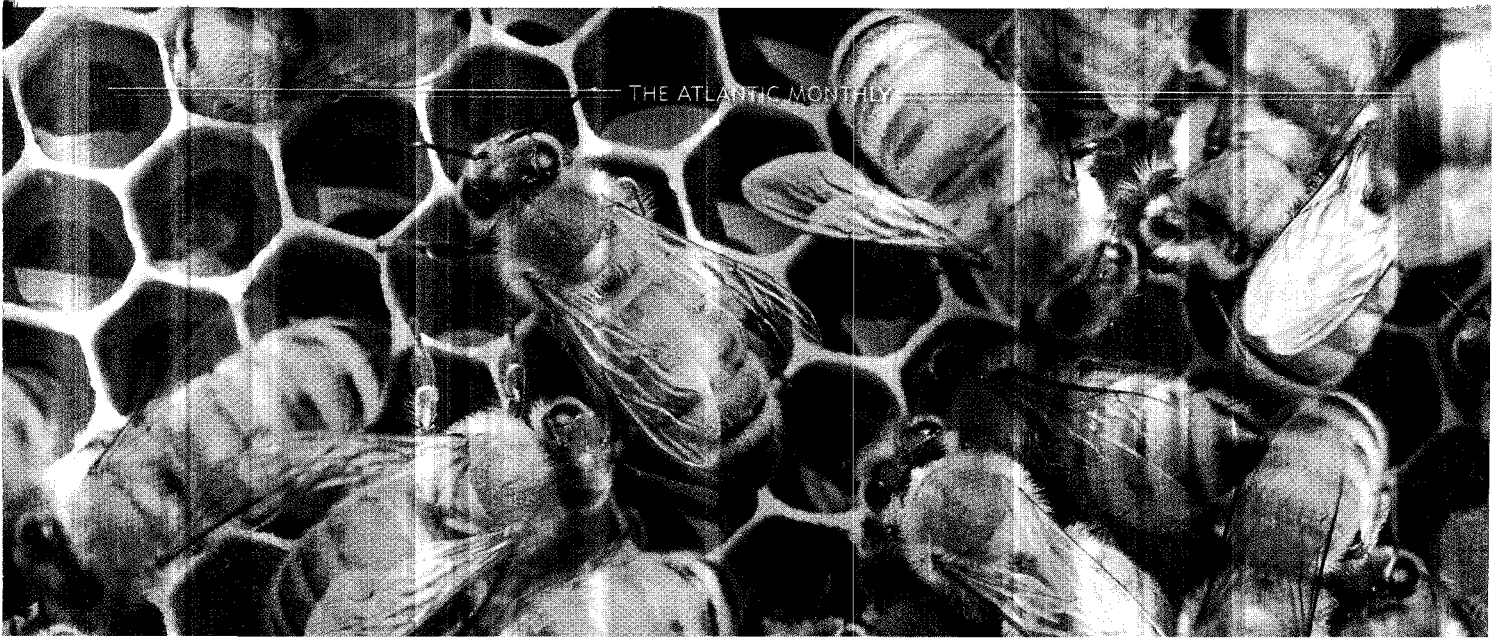
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Can thousands of Wikipedians be wrong? How an attempt to build an online encyclopedia touched off history's biggest experiment in collaborative knowledge

BY MARSHALL POE

the Hive

Several months ago, I discovered that I was being “considered for deletion.” Or rather, the entry on me in the Internet behemoth that is Wikipedia was.

For those of you who are (as uncharitable Wikipedians sometimes say) “clueless newbies,” Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia. But it is like no encyclopedia Diderot could have imagined. Instead of relying on experts to write articles according to their expertise, Wikipedia lets anyone write about anything. You, I, and any wired-up fool can add entries, change entries, even propose that entries be deleted. For reasons I’d rather not share outside of therapy, I created a one-line biographical entry on “Marshall Poe.” It didn’t take long for my tiny article to come to the attention of Wikipedia’s self-appointed guardians. Within a week, a very active—and by most accounts responsible—Scottish Wikipedian named “Alai” decided that ... well, that I wasn’t worth knowing about. Why? “No real evidence of notability,” Alai cruelly but accurately wrote, “beyond the proverbial average college professor.”

Wikipedia has the potential to be the greatest effort in collaborative knowledge gathering the world has ever known, and it may well be the greatest effort in voluntary collaboration of any kind. The English-language version alone has more than a million entries. It is consistently ranked among

the most visited Web sites in the world. A quarter century ago it was inconceivable that a legion of unpaid, unorganized amateurs scattered about the globe could create anything of value, let alone what may one day be the most comprehensive repository of knowledge in human history. Back then we knew that people do not work for free; or if they do work for free, they do a poor job; and if they work for free in large numbers, the result is a muddle. Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger knew all this when they began an online encyclopedia in 1999. Now, just seven years later, everyone knows different.

THE MODERATOR

Jimmy Wales does not fit the profile of an Internet revolutionary. He was born in 1966 and raised in modest circumstances in Huntsville, Alabama. Wales majored in finance at Auburn, and after completing his degree enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Alabama. It was there that he developed a passion for the Internet. His entry point was typical for the nerdy set of his generation: fantasy games.

In 1974, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, two gamers who had obviously read *The Lord of the Rings*, invented the tabletop role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*. The game spread largely

Marshall Poe is the founder of MemoryArchive (www.memoryarchive.org), a universal encyclopedia of memories.

RAUL A. CLEVELAND/CORBIS



through networks of teenage boys, and by 1979, the year the classic *Dungeon Master's Guide* was published, it seemed that every youth who couldn't get a date was rolling the storied twenty-sided die in a shag-carpeted den. Meanwhile, a more electronically inclined crowd at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was experimenting with moving fantasy play from the basement to a computer network. The fruit of their labors was the unfortunately named MUD (Multi-User Dungeon). Allowing masses of players to create virtual fantasy worlds, MUDs garnered a large audience in the 1980s and 1990s under names like Zork, Myst, and Scepter of Goth. (MUDs came to be known as "Multi-Undergraduate Destroyers" for their tendency to divert college students from their studies.)

Wales began to play MUDs at Alabama in the late 1980s. It was in this context that he first encountered the power of networked computers to facilitate voluntary cooperation on a large scale. He did not, however, set up house in these fantasy worlds, nor did he show any evidence of wanting to begin a career in high tech. He completed a degree in finance at Auburn, received a master's in finance at the University of Alabama, and then pursued a Ph.D. in finance at Indiana University. He was interested, it would seem, in finance. In 1994, he quit his doctoral program and moved to Chicago to take a job as an options trader. There he made (as he has repeatedly said) "enough."

Wales is of a thoughtful cast of mind. He was a frequent contributor to the philosophical "discussion lists" (the first popular online discussion forums) that emerged in the late '80s as e-mail spread through the humanities. His particular passion was objectivism, the philosophical system developed by Ayn Rand. In 1989, he initiated the Ayn Rand Philosophy Discussion List and served as moderator—the person who invites and edits e-mails from subscribers. Though discussion lists were not new among the technorati in the 1980s, they were unfamiliar territory for most academics. In the oak-paneled seminar room, everyone had always been careful to behave properly—the chairman sat at the head of the table,

and everyone spoke in turn and stuck to the topic. E-mail lists were something altogether different. Unrestrained by convention and cloaked by anonymity, participants could behave very badly without fear of real consequences. The term for such poor comportment—*flaming*—became one of the first bits of net jargon to enter common usage.

Wales had a careful moderation style:

First, I will frown—very much—on any flaming of any kind whatsoever ... Second, I impose no restrictions on membership based on my own idea of what objectivism really is ... Third, I hope that the list will be more "academic" than some of the others, and tend toward discussions of technical details of epistemology ... Fourth, I have chosen a "middle-ground" method of moderation, a sort of behind-the-scenes prodding.

Wales was an advocate of what is generically termed "openness" online. An "open" online community is one with few restrictions on membership or posting—everyone is welcome, and anyone can say anything as long as it's generally on point and doesn't include gratuitous ad hominem attacks. Openness fit not only Wales's idea of objectivism, with its emphasis on reason and rejection of force, but also his mild personality. He doesn't like to fight. He would rather suffer fools in silence, waiting for them to talk themselves out, than confront them. This patience would serve Wales well in the years to come.

TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP

In the mid-1990s, the great dream of Internet entrepreneurs was to create *the* entry point on the Web. "Portals," as they were called, would provide everything: e-mail, news, entertainment, and, most important, the tools to help users find what they wanted on the Web. As Google later showed, if you build the best "finding aid," you'll be a dominant player. In 1996, the smart money was on "Web directories," man-made guides to the Internet. Both Netscape and Yahoo relied on

FASTEST-GROWING FOREIGN-LANGUAGE WIKIPEDIAS

Among those with 10,000 or more articles as of June 2006

	Number of articles	Percent change from June 2005
1. Turkish	23,416	649
2. Thai	11,894	470
3. Farsi	12,661	413
4. Lithuanian	21,075	396
5. Slovak	39,630	386
6. Arabic	14,015	380
7. Russian	83,815	328
8. Icelandic	10,260	289
9. Basque	10,214	259
10. Italian	162,732	254
11. Polish	239,018	243
12. Ido	13,386	243
13. Hungarian	32,973	233
14. Czech	32,158	214
15. Malaysian	13,358	194
All Wikipedias	4,283,387	132

Web directories as their primary finding aids, and their IPOs in the mid-1990s suggested a bright future. In 1996, Wales and two partners founded a Web directory called Bomis.

Initially, the idea was to build a universal directory, like Yahoo's. The question was how to build it. At the time, there were two dominant models: top-down and bottom-up. The former is best exemplified by Yahoo, which began as *Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web*. Jerry—in this case Jerry Yang, Yahoo's cofounder—set up a system of categories and began to classify Web sites accordingly. Web surfers flocked to the site because no one could find anything on the Web in the early 1990s. So Yang and his partner, David Filo, spent a mountain of venture capital to hire a team of surfers to classify the Web. Yahoo ("Yet Another Hierarchical Official Oracle") was born.

Other would-be classifiers approached the problem of Web chaos more democratically. Beginning from the sound premise that it's good to share, a seventeen-year-old Oregonian named Sage Weil created the first "Web ring" at about the time Yang and Filo were assembling their army of paid Web librarians. A Web ring is nothing more than a set of topically related Web sites that have been linked together for ease of surfing. Rings are easy to find, easy to join, and easy to create; by 1997, they numbered 10,000.

Wales focused on the bottom-up strategy using Web rings, and it worked. Bomis users built hundreds of rings—on cars, computers, sports, and especially "babes" (e.g., the Anna Kournikova Web ring), effectively creating an index of the

"laddie" Web. Instead of helping all users find all content, Bomis found itself positioned as the *Playboy* of the Internet, helping guys find guy stuff. Wales's experience with Web rings reinforced the lesson he had learned with MUDs: given the right technology, large groups of self-interested individuals will unite to create something they could not produce by themselves, be it a sword-and-sorcery world or an index of Web sites on Pamela Anderson. He saw the power of what we now call "peer-to-peer," or "distributed," content production.

Wales was not alone: Rich Skrenta and Bob Truel, two programmers at Sun Microsystems, saw it too. In June 1998, along with three partners, they launched GnuHoo, an all-volunteer alternative to the Yahoo Directory. (GNU, a recursive acronym for "GNU's Not Unix," is a free operating system created by the über-hacker Richard Stallman.) The project was an immediate success, and it quickly drew the attention of Netscape, which was eager to find a directory capable of competing with Yahoo's index. In November 1998, Netscape acquired GnuHoo (then called NewHoo), promising to both develop it and release it under an "open content" license, which meant anyone could use it. At the date of Netscape's acquisition, the directory had indexed some 100,000 URLs; a year later, it included about a million.

Wales clearly had the open-content movement in mind when, in the fall of 1999, he began thinking about a "volunteer-built" online encyclopedia. The idea—explored most prominently in Stallman's 1999 essay "The Free Universal Encyclopedia and Learning Resource"—had been around for some time. Wales says he had no direct knowledge of Stallman's essay when he embarked on his encyclopedia project, but two bits of evidence suggest that he was thinking of Stallman's GNU free documentation license. First, the name Wales adopted for his encyclopedia—Nupedia.org—strongly suggested a Stallman-esque venture. Second, he took the trouble of leasing a related domain name, GNUpedia.org. By January 2000, his encyclopedia project had acquired funding from Bomis and hired its first employee: Larry Sanger.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Sanger was born in 1968 in Bellevue, Washington, a suburb of Seattle. When he was seven, his father, a marine biologist, moved the family to Anchorage, Alaska, where Sanger spent his youth. He excelled in high school, and in 1986 he enrolled at Reed College. Reed is the sort of school you attend if you are intelligent, are not interested in investment banking, and wonder a lot about truth. There Sanger found a question that fired his imagination: What is knowledge? He embarked on that most unremunerative of careers, epistemology, and entered a doctoral program in philosophy at Ohio State.

Sanger fits the profile of almost every Internet early adopter: he'd been a good student, played Dungeons & Dragons, and tinkered with PCs as a youth—going so far as to code a text-based adventure game in BASIC, the first popular programming language. He was drawn into the world of philosophy discussion lists and, in the early 1990s, was an

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

active participant in Wales's objectivism forum. Sanger also hosted a mailing list as part of his own online philosophy project (eventually named the Association for Systematic Philosophy). The mission and mien of Sanger's list stood in stark contrast to Wales's Rand forum. Sanger was far more programmatic. As he wrote in his opening manifesto, dated March 22, 1994:

The history of philosophy is full of disagreement and confusion. One reaction by philosophers to this state of things is to doubt whether the truth about philosophy can ever be known, or whether there is any such thing as the truth about philosophy. But there is another reaction: one may set out to think more carefully and methodically than one's intellectual forebears.

Wales's Rand forum was generally serious, but it was also a place for philosophically inclined laypeople to shoot the breeze: Wales permitted discussion of "objectivism in the movies" or "objectivism in Rush lyrics." Sanger's list was more disciplined, but he soon began to feel it, too, was of limited philosophical worth. He resigned after little more than a year. "I think that my time could really be better spent in the real world," Sanger wrote in his resignation letter, "as opposed to cyberspace, and in thinking to myself, rather than out loud to a bunch of other people." Sanger was seriously considering abandoning his academic career.

As the decade and the century came to a close, another opportunity arose, one that would let Sanger make a living away from academia, using the acumen he had developed on the Internet. In 1998, Sanger created a digest of news reports relating to the "Y2K problem." *Sanger's Review of Y2K News Reports* became a staple of IT managers across the globe. It also set him to thinking about how he might make a living in the new millennium. In January 2000, he sent Wales a business proposal for what was in essence a cultural news blog. Sanger's timing was excellent.

THE CATHEDRAL

Wales was looking for someone with good academic credentials to organize Nupedia, and Sanger fit the bill. Wales pitched the project to Sanger in terms of Eric S. Raymond's essay (and later book) "The Cathedral and the Bazaar." Raymond sketched two models of software development. Under the "cathedral model," source code was guarded by a core group of developers; under the "bazaar model," it was released on the Internet for anyone to tinker with. Raymond argued that the latter model was better, and he coined a now-famous hacker aphorism to capture its superiority: "Given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow." His point was simply that the speed with which a complex project is perfected is directly proportional to the number of informed people

working on it. Wales was enthusiastic about Raymond's thesis. His experience with MUDs and Web rings had demonstrated to him the power of the bazaar. Sanger, the philosopher, was charier about the wisdom-of-crowds scheme but drawn to the idea of creating an open online encyclopedia that would break all the molds. Sanger signed on and moved to San Diego.

According to Sanger, Wales was very "hands-off." He gave Sanger only the loosest sketch of an open encyclopedia. "Open" meant two things: First, anyone, in principle, could contribute. Second, all of the content would be made freely available. Sanger proceeded to create,

GOING GLOBAL

How Wikipedia grew and spread worldwide

Number of articles as of April 2006, in thousands

TOTAL ARTICLES: 4,068

OTHER 627
SLOVAK 35
SERBIAN 37
HEBREW 37
DANISH 42
ESPERANTO 43
NORWEGIAN 59
FINNISH 60
CHINESE 66
RUSSIAN 73
SPANISH 118
PORTUGUESE 132
SWEDISH 156
ITALIAN 160
DUTCH 184
JAPANESE 210
POLISH 234
FRENCH 284
GERMAN 403
ENGLISH 1,108

JANUARY 2001

As of April 2006, English accounted for about 27% of all Wikipedia entries

APRIL 2006

in effect, an online academic journal. There was simply no question in his mind that Nupedia would be guided by a board of experts, that submissions would be largely written by experts, and that articles would be published only after extensive peer review. Sanger set about recruiting academics to work on Nupedia. In early March 2000, he and Wales deemed the project ready to go public, and the Nupedia Web site was launched with the following words:

Suppose scholars the world over were to learn of a serious online encyclopedia effort in which the results were not proprietary to the encyclopedists, but were freely distributable under an open content license in virtually any desired medium. How quickly would the encyclopedia grow?

The answer, as Wales and Sanger found out, was “not very.” Over the first several months little was actually accomplished in terms of article assignment, writing, and publication. First, there was the competition. Wales and Sanger had the bad luck to launch Nupedia around the same time as *Encyclopedia Britannica* was made available for free on the Internet. Then there was the real problem: production. Sanger and the Nupedia board had worked out a multistage editorial system that could have been borrowed from any scholarly journal. In a sense, it worked: assignments were made, articles were submitted and evaluated, and copyediting was done. But, to both Wales and Sanger, it was all much too slow. They had built a cathedral.

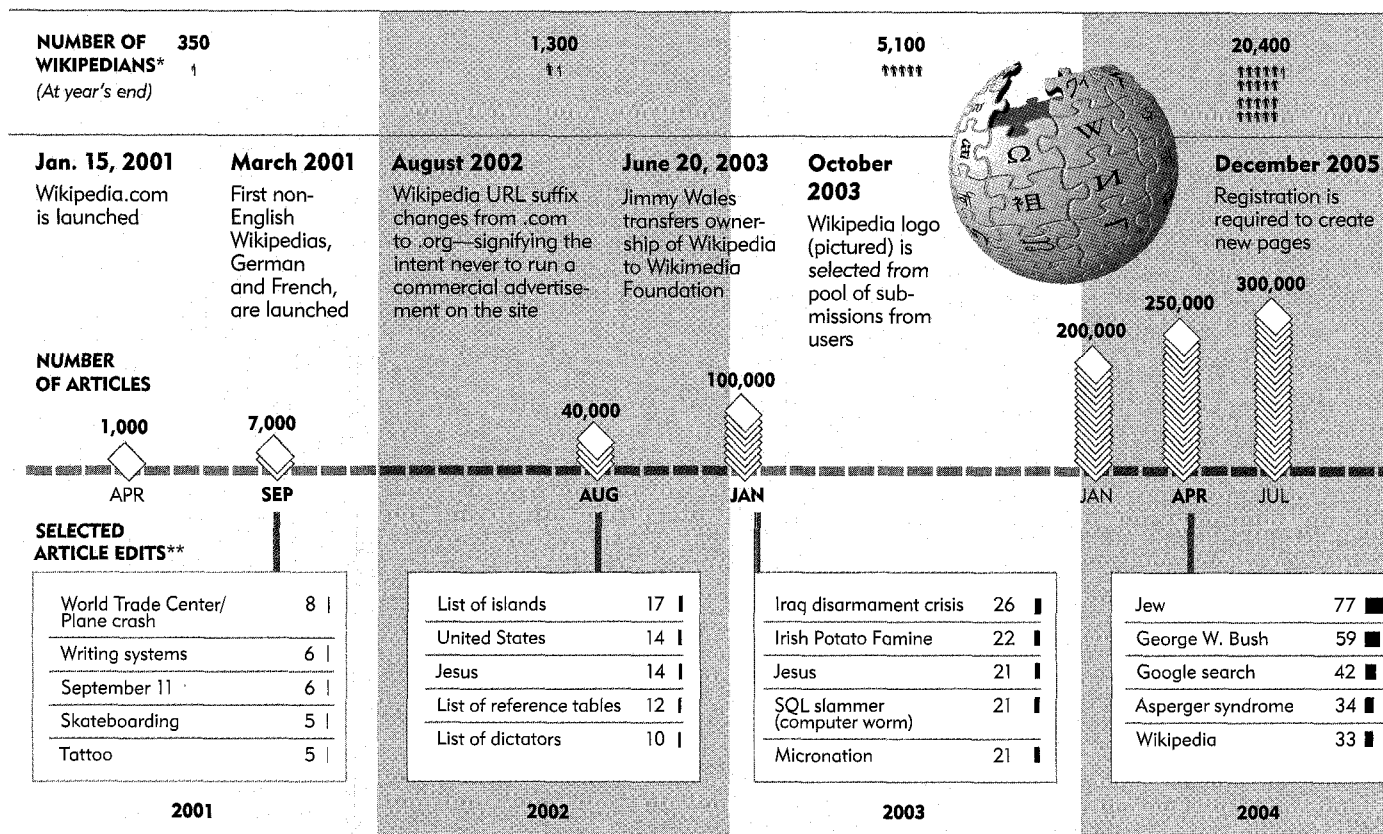
THE BAZAAR

In the mid-1980s, a programmer named Ward Cunningham began trying to create a “pattern language” for software design. A pattern language is in essence a common vocabulary used in solving engineering problems—think of it as best practices for designers. Cunningham believed that software development should have a pattern language, and he proposed to find a way for software developers to create it.

Apple’s Hypercard offered inspiration. Hypercard was a very flexible database application. It allowed users to create records (“cards”), add data fields to them, and link them in sets. Cunningham created a Hypercard “stack” of software patterns and shared it with colleagues. His stack was well liked but difficult to share, since it existed only on Cunningham’s computer. In the 1990s, Cunningham found himself looking for a problem-solving technique that would allow software developers to fine-tune and accumulate their knowledge collaboratively. A variation on Hypercard seemed like an obvious option.

Cunningham coded and, in the spring of 1995, launched the first “wiki,” calling it the “WikiWikiWeb.” (*Wiki* is Hawaiian for “quick,” which Cunningham chose to indicate the ease with which a user could edit the pages.) A wiki is a Web site that allows multiple users to create, edit, and hyperlink pages. As users work, a wiki can keep track of all changes; users can compare versions as they edit and, if necessary, revert to earlier states. Nothing is lost, and everything is transparent.

WIKITRIVIA



* who edited at least ten times since registering **number of registered users who made changes

The wiki quickly gained a devoted following within the software community. And there it remained until January 2001, when Sanger had dinner with an old friend named Ben Kovitz. Kovitz was a fan of “extreme programming.” Standard software engineering is very methodical—first you plan, then you plan and plan and plan, then you code. The premise is that you must correctly anticipate what the program will need to do in order to avoid drastic changes late in the coding process. In contrast, extreme programmers advocate going live with the earliest possible version of new software and letting many people work simultaneously to rapidly refine it.

Over tacos that night, Sanger explained his concerns about Nupedia’s lack of progress, the root cause of which was its serial editorial system. As Nupedia was then structured, no stage of the editorial process could proceed before the previous stage was completed. Kovitz brought up the wiki and sketched out “wiki magic,” the mysterious process by which communities with common interests work to improve wiki pages by incremental contributions. If it worked for the rambunctious hacker culture of programming, Kovitz said, it could work for any online collaborative project. The wiki could break the Nupedia bottleneck by permitting volunteers to work simultaneously all over the project. With Kovitz in tow, Sanger rushed back to his apartment and called Wales to share the idea. Over the next few days he wrote a formal proposal for Wales and started a page on Cunningham’s wiki called “WikiPedia.”

Wales and Sanger created the first Nupedia wiki on January 10, 2001. The initial purpose was to get the public to add

entries that would then be “fed into the Nupedia process” of authorization. Most of Nupedia’s expert volunteers, however, wanted nothing to do with this, so Sanger decided to launch a separate site called “Wikipedia.” Neither Sanger nor Wales looked on Wikipedia as anything more than a lark. This is evident in Sanger’s flip announcement of Wikipedia to the Nupedia discussion list. “Humor me,” he wrote. “Go there and add a little article. It will take all of five or ten minutes.” And, to Sanger’s surprise, go they did. Within a few days, Wikipedia outstripped Nupedia in terms of quantity, if not quality, and a small community developed. In late January, Sanger created a Wikipedia discussion list (Wikipedia-L) to facilitate discussion of the project. At the end of January, Wikipedia had seventeen “real” articles (entries with more than 200 characters). By the end of February, it had 150; March, 572; April, 835; May, 1,300; June, 1,700; July, 2,400; August, 3,700. At the end of the year, the site boasted approximately 15,000 articles and about 350 “Wikipedians.”

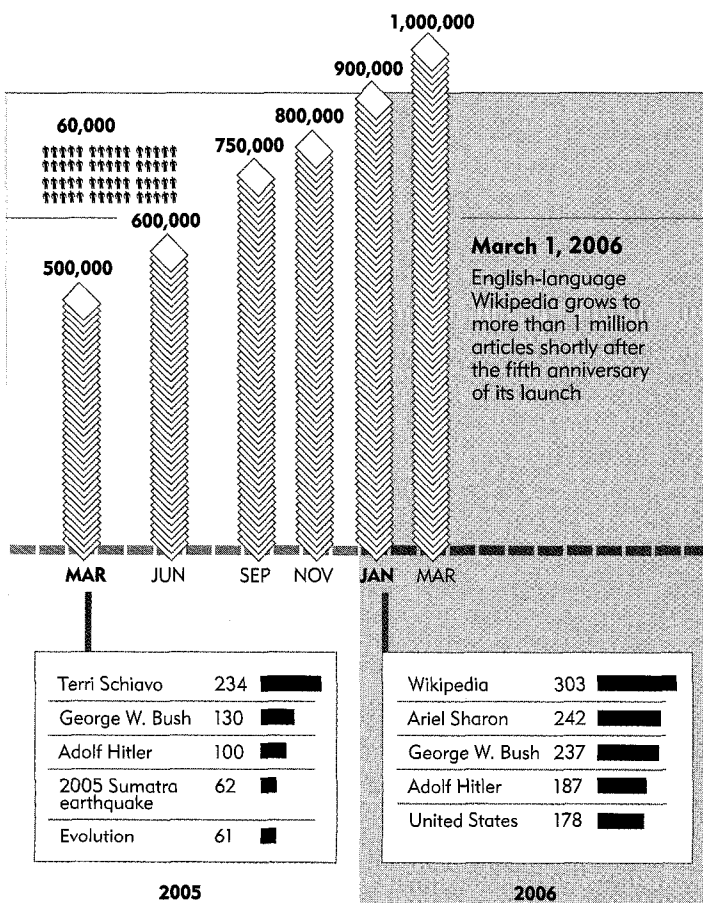
SETTING THE RULES

Wikipedia’s growth caught Wales and Sanger off guard. It forced them to make quick decisions about what Wikipedia would be, how to foster cooperation, and how to manage it. In the beginning it was by no means clear what an “open” encyclopedia should include. People posted all manner of things: dictionary definitions, autobiographies, position papers, historical documents, and original research. In response, Sanger created a “What Wikipedia Is Not” page. There he and the community defined Wikipedia by exclusion—not a dictionary, not a scientific journal, not a source collection, and so on. For everything else, they reasoned that if an article could conceivably have gone in *Britannica*, it was “encyclopedic” and permitted; if not, it was “not encyclopedic” and deleted.

Sanger and Wales knew that online collaborative ventures can easily slide into a morass of unproductive invective. They had already worked out a solution for Nupedia, called the “lack of bias” policy. On Wikipedia it became NPOV, or the “neutral point of view,” and it brilliantly encouraged the work of the community. Under NPOV, authors were enjoined to present the conventionally acknowledged “facts” in an unbiased way, and, where arguments occurred, to accord space to both sides. The concept of neutrality, though philosophically unsatisfying, had a kind of everybody-lay-down-your-arms ring to it. Debates about what to include in the article were encouraged on the “discussion” page that attends every Wikipedia article.

The most important initial question, however, concerned governance. When Wikipedia was created, wikis were synonymous with creative anarchy. Both Wales and Sanger thought that the software might be useful, but that it was no way to build a trusted encyclopedia. Some sort of authority was assumed to be essential. Wales’s part in it was clear: he owned Wikipedia. Sanger’s role was murkier.

Citing the communal nature of the project, Sanger refused the title of “editor in chief,” a position he held at Nupedia, opting instead to be “chief organizer.” He governed the



All figures are estimates for English-language Wikipedia only

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

day-to-day operations of the project in close consultation with the “community,” the roughly two dozen committed Wikipedians (most of them Nupedia converts) who were really designing the software and adding content to the site. Though the division of powers between Sanger and the community remained to be worked out, an important precedent had been set: Wikipedia would have an owner, but no leader.

THE CUNCTATOR

By October 2001, the number of Wikipedians was growing by about fifty a month. There were a lot of new voices, among them a user known as “The Cunctator” (Latin for “procrastinator” or “delayer”). “Cunc,” as he was called, advocated a combination of anarchy (no hierarchy within the project) and radical openness (few or no limitations on contributions). Sanger was not favorably disposed to either of these positions, though he had not had much of a chance to air his opposition. Cunc offered such an opportunity by launching a prolonged “edit war” with Sanger in mid-October of that year. In an edit war, two or more parties cyclically cancel each other’s work on an article with no attempt to find the NPOV. It’s the wiki equivalent of “No, *your* mother wears combat boots.”

With Cunc clearly in mind, Sanger curtly defended his role before the community on November 1, 2001:

I need to be granted fairly broad authority by the community—by you, dear reader—if I am going to do my job effectively. Until fairly recently, I was granted such authority by Wikipedians. I was indeed not infrequently called to justify decisions I made, but not constantly and nearly always respectfully and helpfully. This place in the community did not make me an all-powerful editor who must be obeyed on pain of ousting; but it did make me a leader. That’s what I want, again. This is my job.

Seen from the trenches, this was a striking statement. Sanger had so far said he was *primus inter pares*; now he seemed to be saying that he was just *primus*. Upon reading this post, one Wikipedian wrote: “Am I the only person who detects a change in [Sanger’s] view of his own position? Am I the only person who fears this is a change for the worse?”

On November 4, the Sanger-Cunc contretemps exploded. Simon Kissane, a respected Wikipedian, accused Sanger of capriciously deleting pages, including some of Cunc’s work. Sanger denied the allegation but implied that the excised material was no great loss. He then launched a defense of his position in words that bled resentment:

I do reserve the right to permanently delete things—particularly when they have little merit and when they are posted by people whose main motive is evidently to undermine my authority and therefore, as far as I’m concerned, damage the project. Now suppose that, in my experience, if I make an attempt to justify this or other sorts of decisions, the people in question will simply co-opt huge amounts of my time and will never simply say, “Larry, you win; we realize that this decision is up to you, and we’ll have to respect it.” Then, in

order to preserve my time and sanity, I have to act like an autocrat. In a way, I am being trained to act like an autocrat. It’s rather clever in a way—if you think college-level stunts are clever. Frankly, it’s hurting the project, guys—so stop it, already. Just write articles—please!

The blowup disturbed Wales to no end. As a list moderator, he had tried hard to keep his discussants out of flame wars. He weighed in with an unusually forceful posting that warned against a “culture of conflict.” Wikipedia, he implied, was about building an encyclopedia, not about debating how to build or govern an encyclopedia. Echoing Sanger, he argued that the primary duty of community members was to contribute—by writing code, adding content, and editing. Enough talk, he seemed to be saying: we know what to do, now let’s get to work. Yet he also seemed to take a quiet stand against Sanger’s positions on openness and on his own authority:

Just speaking off the top of my head, I think that total deletions seldom make sense. They should be reserved primarily for pages that are just completely mistaken (typos, unlikely misspellings), or for pages that are nothing more than insults.

Wales also made a strong case that anyone deleting pages should record his or her identity, explain his or her reasons, and archive the entire affair.

Within several weeks, Sanger and Cunc were at each other’s throats again. Sanger had proposed creating a “Wikipedia Militia” that would deal with issues arising from sudden massive influxes of new visitors. It was hardly a bad idea: such surges did occur (they’re commonly called “slash-dottings”). But Cunc saw in Sanger’s reasonable proposition a very slippery slope toward “central authority.” “You start deputizing groups of people to do necessary and difficult tasks,” he wrote, “fast-forward two/three years, and you have pernicious cabals.”

Given the structure of Wikipedia there was little Sanger could do to defend himself. The principles of the project denied him real punitive authority: he couldn’t ban “trolls”—users like Cunc who baited others for sport—and deleting posts was evidence of tyranny in the eyes of Sanger’s detractors. A defensive strategy wouldn’t work either, as the skilled moderator’s tactic for fighting bad behavior—ignoring it—was blunted by the wiki. On e-mail lists, unanswered inflammatory posts quickly vanish under layers of new discussion; on a wiki, they remain visible to all, often near the tops of pages. Sanger was trapped by his own creation.

THE “GOD-KING”

Wales saw that Sanger was having trouble managing the project. Indeed, he seems to have sensed that Wikipedia really needed no manager. In mid-December 2001, citing financial shortfalls, he told Sanger that Bomis would be cutting its staff and that he should look for a new job. To that point, Wales and his partners

had supported both Nupedia and Wikipedia. But with Bomis suffering in the Internet bust, there was financial pressure. Early on, Wales had said that advertising was a possibility, but the community was now set against any commercialization. In January 2002, Sanger loaded up his possessions and returned to Ohio.

Cunc responded to Sanger's departure with apparent appreciation:

I know that we've hardly been on the best of terms, but I want you to know that I'll always consider you one of the most important Wikipedians, and I hope that you'll always think of yourself as a Wikipedian, even if you don't have much time to contribute. Herding cats ain't easy; you did a good job, all things considered.

Characteristically, Sanger took this as nothing more than provocation: "Oh, how nice and gracious this was. Oh, thank you SO much, Cunctator. I'm sure glad I won't have to deal with you anymore, Cunctator. You're a friggin' piece of work." The next post on the list is from Wales, who showed a business-as-usual sangfroid: "With the resignation of Larry, there is a much less pressing need for funds."

Sanger made two great contributions to Wikipedia: he built it, and he left it. After forging a revolutionary mode of knowledge building, he came to realize—albeit dimly at first—that it was not to his liking. He found that he was not heading a disciplined crew of qualified writers and editors collaborating on authoritative statements (the Nupedia ideal), but trying to control an ill-disciplined crowd of volunteers fighting over ever-shifting articles. From Sanger's point of view, both the behavior of the participants and the quality of the scholarship were wanting. Even after seeing Wikipedia's explosive growth, Sanger continued to argue that Wikipedia should engage experts and that Nupedia should be saved.

Wales, though, was a businessman. He wanted to build a free encyclopedia, and Wikipedia offered a very rapid and economically efficient means to that end. The articles flooded in, many were good, and they cost him almost nothing. Why interfere? Moreover, Wales was not really the meddling kind. Early on, Wikipedians took to calling him the "God-King." The appellation is purely ironic. Over the past four years, Wales has repeatedly demonstrated an astounding reluctance to use his power, even when the community has begged him to. He wouldn't exile trolls or erase offensive material, much less settle on rules for how things should or should not be done. In 2003, Wales diminished his own authority by transferring Wikipedia and all of its assets to

the nonprofit Wikimedia Foundation, whose sole purpose is to set general policy for Wikipedia and its allied projects. (He is one of five members of the foundation's board.)

Wales's benign rule has allowed Wikipedia to do what it does best: grow. The numbers are staggering. The English-language Wikipedia alone has well more than a million articles and expands by about 1,700 a day. (*Britannica's* online version, by comparison, has about 100,000 articles.) As of mid-February 2006, more than 65,000 Wikipedians—registered users who have made at least ten edits since joining—had contributed to the English-language Wikipedia. The number of registered contributors is increasing by more than 6,000 a month; the number of unregistered contributors is presumably much larger. Then there are the 200-odd non-English-language Wikipedias. Nine of them already have more than 100,000 entries each, and nearly all of the major-language versions are growing on pace with the English version.

WHAT IS WIKIPEDIA?

The Internet did not create the desire to collect human knowledge. For most of history, however, standardizing and gathering knowledge was hard to do very effectively. The main problem was rampant equivocation. Can we all agree on what an apple is exactly, or the shades of the color green? Not easily. The wiki offered a way for people

to actually decide in common. On Wikipedia, an apple is what the contributors say it is *right now*. You can try to change the definition by throwing in your own two cents, but the community—the voices actually negotiating and renegotiating the definition—decides in the end. Wikipedia grew out of a natural impulse (communication) facilitated by a new technology (the wiki).

The power of the community to decide, of course, asks us to reexamine what we mean when we say that something is "true." We tend to think of truth as something that resides in the world. The fact that two plus two equals four is written in the stars—we merely discovered it. But Wikipedia suggests a different theory of truth. Just think about the way we learn what words mean. Generally speaking, we do so by listening to other people (our parents, first). Since we want to communicate with them (after all, they feed us), we use the words in the same way they do.

Wikipedia says judgments of truth and falsehood work the same way. The community decides that two plus two equals four the same way it decides what an apple is: by consensus. Yes, that means that if the community changes its mind and decides that two plus two equals five, then two plus two does equal five. The community isn't likely to do such an absurd or useless thing, but it has the ability.

MOST-EDITED ARTICLES

As of June 17, 2006

	Total Edits
1. George W. Bush	30,393
2. Wikipedia	17,919
3. Jesus	14,183
4. United States	13,806
5. Adolf Hitler	11,947
6. Hurricane Katrina	11,191
7. World War II	10,722
8. RuneScape	10,596
9. Michael Jackson	9,342
10. Canada	8,783
11. Britney Spears	8,672
12. Islam	8,566
13. John Kerry	8,395
14. 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake	8,278
15. Bill Clinton	8,241
16. Anarchism	8,220
17. September 11, 2001, attacks	7,666
18. Christianity	7,601
19. Wii (Nintendo)	7,548
20. Pope Benedict XVI	7,302

Early detractors commonly made two criticisms of Wikipedia. First, unless experts were writing and vetting the material, the articles were inevitably going to be inaccurate. Second, since anyone could edit, vandals would have their way with even the best articles, making them suspect. No encyclopedia produced in this way could be trusted. Last year, however, a study in the journal *Nature* compared *Britannica* and Wikipedia science articles and suggested that the former are usually only marginally more accurate than the latter. *Britannica* demonstrated that *Nature's* analysis was seriously flawed ("Fatally Flawed" was the fair title of the response), and no one has produced a more authoritative study of Wikipedia's accuracy. Yet it is a widely accepted view that Wikipedia is comparable to *Britannica*. Vandalism also has proved much less of an issue than originally feared. A study by IBM suggests that although vandalism does occur (particularly on high-profile entries like "George W. Bush"), watchful members of the huge Wikipedia community usually swoop down to stop the malfeasance shortly after it begins.

There are, of course, exceptions, as in the case of the journalist John Seigenthaler, whose Wikipedia biography long contained a libel about his supposed complicity in the assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy. But even this example shows that the system is, if not perfect, at least responsive. When Seigenthaler became aware of the error, he contacted Wikipedia. The community (led in this instance by Wales) purged the entry of erroneous material, expanded it, and began to monitor it closely. Even though the Seigenthaler entry is often attacked by vandals, and is occasionally locked to block them, the page is more reliable precisely because it is now under "enough eyeballs." The same could be said about many controversial entries on Wikipedia: the quality of articles generally increases with the number of eyeballs. Given enough eyeballs, all errors are shallow.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

In June 2001, only six months after Wikipedia was founded, a Polish Wikipediaian named Krzysztof Jasiutowicz made an arresting and remarkably forward-looking observation. The Internet, he mused, was nothing but a "global Wikipedia without the end-user editing facility." The contents of the Internet—its pages—are created by a loose community of users, namely those on the Web. The contents of Wikipedia—its entries—are also created by a loose community of users, namely Wikipediaians. On the Internet, contributors own their own pages, and only they can edit them. They can also create new pages as they see fit. On Wikipedia, contributors own *all* of the pages collectively, and each can edit nearly every page. Page creation is ultimately subject to community approval. The private-property regime that governs the Internet allows it to grow freely, but it makes organization and improvement very difficult. In contrast, Wikipedia's communal regime permits growth *plus* organization and improvement. The result of this difference is there for all to see: much of the Internet is a chaotic mess and therefore useless, whereas Wikipedia is well ordered and hence very useful.

Having seen all of this in prospect, Jasiutowicz asked a logical question: "Can someone please tell me what's the end point/goal of Wikipedia?" Wales responded, only half jokingly, "The goal of Wikipedia is fun for the contributors." He had a point. Editing Wikipedia *is* fun, and even rewarding. The site is huge, so somewhere on it there is probably something you know quite a bit about. Imagine that you happen upon your pet subject, or perhaps even look it up to see how it's being treated. And what do you find? Well, this date is wrong, that characterization is poor, and a word is misspelled. You click the "edit" tab and make the corrections, and you've just contributed to the progress of human knowledge. All in under five minutes, and at no cost.

Yet Wikipedia has a value that goes far beyond the enjoyment of its contributors. For all intents and purposes, the project is laying claim to a vast region of the Internet, a territory we might call "common knowledge." It is the place where all nominal information about objects of widely shared experience will be negotiated, stored, and renegotiated. When you want to find out *what something is*, you will go to Wikipedia, for that is where common knowledge will, by convention, be archived and updated and made freely available. And while you are there, you may just add or change a little something, and thereby feel the pride of authorship shared by the tens of thousands of Wikipediaians.

KEEPER

One of the objects of common knowledge in Wikipedia, I'm relieved to report, is "Marshall Poe." Recall that the Scottish Wikipediaian Alai said that I had no "notability" and therefore couldn't really be considered encyclopedic. On the same day that Alai suggested my entry be deleted, a rather vigorous discussion took place on the "discussion" page that attended the Marshall Poe entry. A Wikipediaian who goes by "Dlyons493" discovered that I had indeed written an obscure dissertation on an obscure topic at a not-so-obscure university. He gave the article a "Weak Keep." Someone with the handle "Splash" searched Amazon and verified that I had indeed written books on Russian history, so my claim to be a historian was true. He gave me a "Keep." And finally, my champion and hero, a Wikipediaian called "Tupsharru," dismissed my detractors with this:

Keep. Obvious notability. Several books published with prestigious academic publishers. One of his books has even been translated into Swedish. I don't know why I have to repeat this again and again in these deletion discussions on academics, but don't just use Amazon when the Library of Congress catalogue is no farther than a couple of mouse clicks away.

Bear in mind that I knew none of these people, and they had, as far as I know, no interest other than truth in doing all of this work. Yet they didn't stop with verifying my claims and approving my article. They also searched the Web for material they could use to expand my one-line biography. After they were done, the Marshall Poe entry was two paragraphs long and included a good bibliography. Now that's wiki magic. ▀

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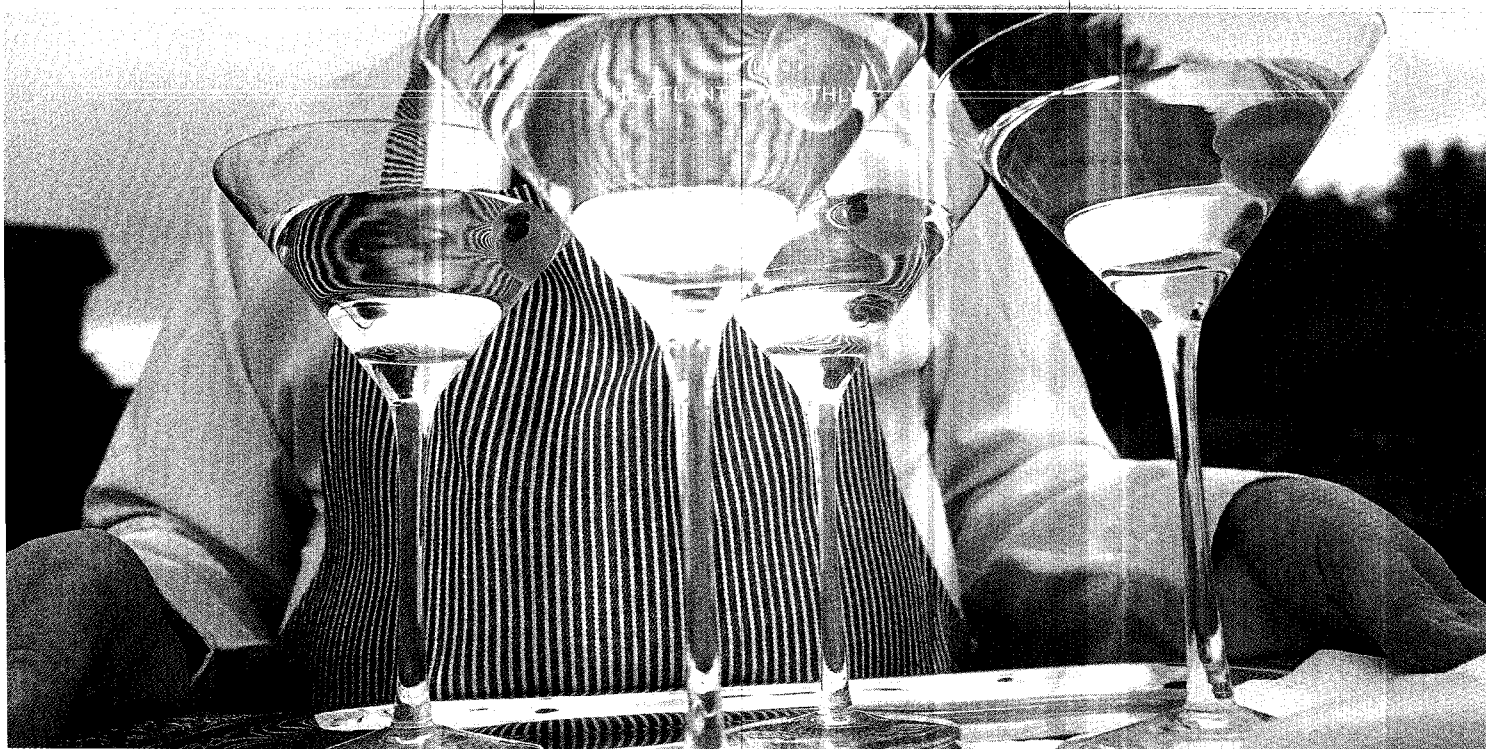
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Need designer lighting for your jet? Fancy a dressage horse for your daughter? Have staffing issues in your 50,000-square-foot house? A growing army of experts stands ready to bear any burden for the ultrarich

BY SHEELAH KOLHATKAR

Inside the Billionaire Service Industry

The gap between the rich and the poor has been growing wider for some time, but the *really* rich have now achieved escape velocity. They have far more money than ever before—and a mind-boggling number of decisions to make about spending it. The “ultrarich”—loosely defined as those with investable assets of more than \$30 million—often lead tremendously complicated lives. There are approximately 30,000 such people based in the United States, and nearly 50,000 elsewhere in the world, according to Capgemini and Merrill Lynch’s *World Wealth Report of 2005*. They are the aristocracy of a new Gilded Age—and providing services to them has turned into a gold rush.

Becoming wealthy in the first place might seem like the hard part, but once a person *has* money, other real challenges present themselves: What kind of rich person does one want to be? Is a sprawling mansion or a slender townhouse preferable? Should one build a game park or an English garden? And then there is the matter of figuring out who should look after all these things. To hear the caretakers of the ultrarich describe it, the

wealthiest among us are like dinghies adrift on the open sea—lost in their money and the endless options that come with it. (You could call it “Overwhelmed Billionaire Syndrome.”) Fortunately, the free market will provide: an army of experts has sprung up to help them navigate their lives.

One of these experts is Natasha Pearl, a former management consultant who was trekking through Nepal five years ago when she realized what she was put on earth to do: help the wealthiest people make their lives easier. She came home and transformed herself into a “lifestyle consultant,” and she hasn’t looked back.

Some of Pearl’s customers have problems that the merely upper-middle class could hardly conceive of. She has helped parents look into buying a \$40,000 dressage horse for their daughter to ride while away at college, sorted through museum-quality art collections forgotten in storage, and found an expert to negotiate aircraft leases.

Sheelah Kolhatkar is a reporter for The New York Observer.

One family considered hiring her to find public-relations specialists who could help with crisis management—basically, to keep them out of the

news and off the Forbes 400 list. (Getting *on* the list may be a triumph in some circles, but in others it's even better to stay *off*.) And a young hedge-fund manager asked Pearl if she could find someone to identify the best parties in New York, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles each week—and to make sure he was invited. (She turned down this assignment.)

Business for consultants like Pearl isn't likely to slow down anytime soon. A look at the wealthiest Americans reveals that those at the very pinnacle—the top 0.1 percent—have done so well in recent years that everyone else is eating their (gold) dust. An analysis by David Cay Johnston in *The New York Times* found that the average annual inflation-adjusted income of this group increased by two and a half times, to \$3 million, from 1980 to 2002. The average net worth of those on the Forbes 400 list has mushroomed in the last twenty years, rising from \$390 million to \$2.8 billion, and the number of U.S. billionaires has increased over that same time from thirteen to 374. By some measures, the fortunes of today's richest people are as concentrated as those of their predecessors in the Roaring Twenties and the robber-baron era of the late 1800s.

In the meantime, America's less fortunate have seen their share of the country's wealth drop—but there's nothing like shopping to ease the pain! Lubricated with cheap credit and the social acceptability of carrying huge amounts of personal debt, Americans at all income levels pile into the luxury marketplace alongside those who can actually afford to shop there. And so the truly wealthy have had to get more creative about spending money in order to distinguish themselves from the shopgirls waiting on them, who are likely to be carrying the same Hermès handbag (or at least a convincing knockoff). One way to set themselves apart is by pouring resources into experience and “lifestyle.”

All manner of professionals see a future in whispering into billionaires' ears. (It would be a decidedly “soft” science, but one can imagine “helicopter-fleet management” becoming a university degree.) Like any subculture, this piece of the service sector comes with its own assumptions and its own delusions. Its practitioners are as slick and on-message as a group of Wharton-trained management consultants. Plenty of self-aggrandizing jargon gets thrown around: terms like *ultra-high net worth* are mixed in with Jack Welch-style business talk; rich people are *principals*, and even the most minute aspects of their lives require *management* in order to be *optimized*. This work requires subtlety, even amateur psychoanalysis; those providing the services are selling trust to people with unlimited resources, coaxing them into articulating their dissatisfactions and then doing something about them (which usually means spending boatloads of money). Sometimes pie charts are involved.

The job isn't all champagne and roses. “You have to be selective,” says Mark Hancock, a managing director at Tiedemann Trust Company who handles finances for eight ultrarich families. “I'm not just taking any multibillionaire off the street. These people are typically control freaks—extremely focused, sometimes extremely difficult. You don't become a billionaire by just sitting passively by.”

The wealthier the client is, the more options there are for insourcing advice on how to spend creatively. Pearl touts her company, Aston Pearl, as “The Private Bank for Everything Except Money,” and she comes armed with a Rolodex that would make a village yenta proud: 3,800 names in 267 subcategories, including “designers of lighting for Gulfstream aircraft” and “specialists in seventeenth-century hand colored maps.” Once all those advisers are hired, they need to be managed, transforming the wealthy person into a corporation in miniature.

Her sense that the ultrarich are sometimes almost helpless when confronted with the challenges of everyday life infuses Pearl with compassion; she sees her job as a combination of sales and public service. Around the next corner, for example, an opportunistic decorator might be lurking, hoping to bilk an unsuspecting billionaire on overpriced housewares. (Recall the former Tyco CEO Dennis Kozlowski's explanation of the wildly extravagant shower curtain found in his apartment after he was indicted: “I understand why a \$6,000 shower curtain seems indefensible,” he told *The New York Times*. “But I didn't even know about it. I just wasn't even aware of it.”) “The wealthiest people are very vulnerable to being taken advantage of,” Pearl says, her voice taking on an urgent tone. “New money doesn't know what things cost, because they've never bought a Mercedes Maybach or a \$10 million home. And old money also has difficulties, because they're shielded from these things. They don't *shop*, generally. They have people shopping *for* them.”

Even vacationing is no simple matter. For the ultrarich, time-shares have morphed into “destination clubs.” At the travel firm Tanner & Haley, for example, \$1.5 million up front—an “investment” that may be resold at market value when the client leaves—and an annual fee of \$75,000 buys a membership to the company's “Legendary Retreats”: thirty-four homes around the world, each worth \$7 million to \$10 million. “Some people really care about doing it as well as it can possibly be done,” says Rob McGrath, Tanner & Haley's CEO. “If you end up in a house in Telluride that has a bowling alley in it, a game room, a staff of nine, twenty-seven TVs, and a private chef, and you're right on the slopes, and you fly in on your Lear 60, that's pretty damn good.”

A comparable level of exclusivity is available to the well-heeled patient wanting insulation from the American health-care system. For initiation fees of \$1,000 to \$15,000 and annual dues of between \$2,500 and \$50,000 (six levels of membership are available), a company called PinnacleCare assigns “advocates” who will manage a client's health care—investigating specialists and medical research, securing access to top doctors, and juggling appointments. (The cost of the treatment itself is separate.) Nearly all of the advocates are women, and they exude a motherly efficiency, cooing to their clients and sweet-talking the surgeons. But one suspects that their claws come out when necessary. Having an advocate present during a hospital stay, one client said, is like having an extremely knowledgeable relative on hand for hours a day, exerting relentless pressure to get whatever the patient needs.

The ultrarich often have a “fix me, get me surgery right away” attitude, and will pay handsomely to have it accommodated, says John Hutchins, who cofounded Pinnacle in 2002. (He was the director of international services at Johns Hopkins Hospital from 1994 to 2001, and held a similar post at the Cleveland Clinic before that; both were treatment centers of choice for sheikhs, Latin American moguls, and other well-connected foreigners.) I heard of one family that kept a group of doctors on retainer for years, paying some of them more than \$100,000 annually to be available at a moment’s notice. But the arrangement became difficult to maintain: the best doctors resisted being tied to a small group of patients, and some questioned whether the practice was ethical. So the family joined Pinnacle instead.

And of course there are the children to think of. The ultrarich mirror other Americans in their anxious devotion to their progeny, and they have taken to hiring specialized psychologists to address the various issues—aimlessness, a sense of entitlement, and so on—that may afflict them. One financial adviser was reportedly asked to find someone to teach a client’s children about wealth and the responsibilities that come with it. He got quotes from four “wealth counselors”: the cheapest was \$1,600 a day, the most expensive, \$16,000.

As this story illustrates, finding the market price is one of the trickier aspects of serving the ultrarich. “There’s *no* transparency about what the fees should be,” Pearl says. “How much do you charge someone to curate their wine collection? You can’t comparison shop for that.” She does offer one rule of thumb: “If you’re not the type of person who’s planning an anniversary party in the south of France for fifty friends, where you’re going to fly them over, we’re probably not going to be able to help you. It’s not that we *can’t* help you; but you’ll find that our fees are prohibitive for what you want done.”

BECOMING SUPER-JEEVES

There are now entire schools devoted to training professionals to serve the ultrarich. One of the most prominent is the Starkey International Institute for Household Management, in Denver. On the first day of a four-week course on running a household (programs last four or eight weeks), there was much talk about a recent star graduate, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel who had just landed a \$125,000-a-year job as an estate manager near Washington, D.C. His boss, a businessman worth about \$1.2 billion, had a grand vision for integrating architecture, landscaping, and a vast modern-art collection on his nearly 200-acre estate. The former lieutenant colonel would be designing a model for running it and two other properties, setting up security for all three, maintaining a private jet, and generally trying to ensure his boss’s perfect quality of life.

An estate manager’s role goes far beyond that of the classic butler or personal assistant—picture Jeeves crossed with the CEO of a Fortune 500 company. It usually involves overseeing multiple residences (a “household manager,” by contrast, is typically in charge of just one). This job has become a hot second career for former members of the military, who may retire as young as forty and are seen as trustworthy and able to

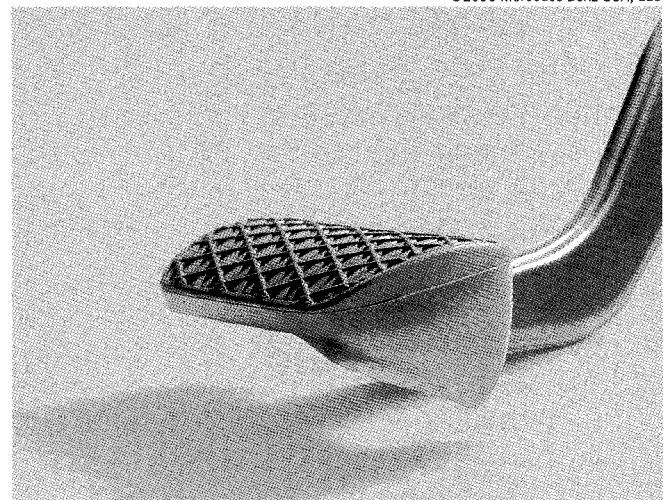
take orders without flinching. Along with others who have already had substantial careers or who hold advanced degrees—people who would normally never consider a position as a “domestic”—they are signing up at the institute in droves.

The Starkey International Institute was founded by Mary Louise Starkey in 1990. A hard-nosed fiftysomething entrepreneur with watery hazel eyes and a voice that could cut through lead, Starkey is fond of grand pronouncements like “The age of service is upon us.” When that age arrived, she was more than ready for it.

Perched on a chair in her bright, cluttered office, Starkey told me that her business—which includes several ventures in addition to the school—is “exploding.” The day we spoke, she was a little bleary, having just returned from Vanuatu, a cluster of islands in the South Pacific. An American investor had bought one of the islands and hired Starkey to create a vacation spot worth renting for, say, \$250,000 a week. There will be just one villa, offering absolute privacy. Being on the island is “like being the only person on the planet,” Starkey said. The name of the island is a secret, and rentals will be by invitation only, to protect against paparazzi. Two of Starkey’s graduates were already there, preparing to train locals in six-figure pampering.

Starkey’s bread and butter, however, is placing graduates of the institute inside mega-mansions in the United States. The school is housed in a 13,000-square-foot Georgian mansion. Gilt mirrors, potted orchids, and glittering crystal

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abound. The students attend lectures in the basement and rotate through all the jobs they might either hold or have to supervise, from household manager to assistant chef. They spring like panthers at the sight of a fleck of lint. As a result, the place is brilliantly, terrifyingly clean.

The crop of new students I met consisted of four men and two women, all age forty or so. Two—one man and one woman—were enlisted aides in the armed forces (a position that entails keeping quarters and preparing meals for top-ranking officers); the military was paying their tuition. One man had just retired after thirty years in the Air Force. The remaining two men were strikingly cherubic: one had been an interior designer and a private chef in Texas; the other had managed households for six families in Florida (he was looking to brush up on his skills). The sixth student, a mother of three young children, owns a property-management firm in Chicago. The instructor, meanwhile, had been a White House chef to George H. W. Bush and served on the private staff of Al and Tipper Gore.

On the first morning, Starkey delivered a pep talk clearly aimed at convincing the students that they do not face a future of indentured servitude. "Service is a well-recognized

expertise and a highly paid career path," she declared. Dressed in black, with a turquoise wrap flung over her shoulders, she worked the room with evangelical zeal; after each statement, she narrowed her eyes and stared at the students with blazing intensity, as if the Almighty Himself were speaking through her. It was important to learn "to be on someone else's agenda," she said, adding, "It's much easier serving someone who knows what they want." She showed slides of alumni: a young man with a passion for cars who had been placed with an auto collector; a grinning woman who had become the head stewardess on one of the biggest yachts in the world. "This is one of my Chinese graduates," Starkey said, showing a picture of a man in a servant's jacket reminiscent of the ones worn on *The Love Boat*. "Isn't he beautiful? I fall in love with all my students."

It must be tough love: Starkey has stringent expectations. She admonishes students to begin a placement by studying their employers as if they were laboratory specimens, in order to thoroughly understand their lifestyles and needs. (To illustrate her point, she cited clients in Denver, "Pakistani royalty" who take their main meal each day at 2 a.m. and fly cooked dinners to their grown children in California daily.)

Suggested "talking points" in the institute's textbook include the following: "What are your overall goals and dreams of your lifestyle?" "Could you please use descriptive words and experiences to list three everyday priorities that speak to quality of life for you?" "At the end of your life, what accomplishments will you be most proud of?" Students are urged to make lists of their employers' tastes and sort them into the ten categories in the textbook's "Service Matrix." Under "Culinary Standards" the choices include "prefers clean, fresh style foods," "comfort food," "popcorn and chocolate," "loves all cookies." There are spaces on the grid for "prefers foreign autos," "never travels commercially," "wants all light bulbs changed weekly," "prefers household manager to know smart-home technology." It's all geared toward creating the ultimate luxury product: a remote brain calibrated to an employer's every whim and desire, one that can anticipate all needs and eliminate most decisions from daily life.

On Day Two, the students were given laminated floor plans for a "fairly large house" (6,000 square feet) under construction near Fort Worth. Working in pairs, they had to determine how many employees would be needed to maintain the house, which will include a library, a music room, and a "Moroccan room"; then they had to "zone" each floor for the cleaning staff. The students huddled and strategized, using Sharpie markers to create intricate diagrams studded with colorful arrows. The Moroccan room wouldn't know what hit it.

Most of the people who contact Starkey seeking household help are retired CEOs, current business owners, or entrepreneurs who have sold their companies. She also gets calls from resorts and from private hospitals that want to emulate four-star hotels.

EVERYONE WAS IN LOVE

One day, when they were little, Maud and Fergus
appeared in the doorway, naked and mirthful,
with a dozen long garter snakes draped over
each of them like brand-new clothes.
Snake tails dangled down their backs,
and snake foreparts in various lengths
fell over their fronts, heads raised
and swaying, alert as cobras. They writhed their dry skins
upon each other, as snakes like doing
in lovemaking, with the added novelty
of caressing soft, smooth, moist human skin.
Maud and Fergus were deliciously pleased with themselves.
The snakes seemed to be tickled too.
We were enchanted. Everyone was in love.
Then Maud drew down off Fergus's shoulder,
as off a tie rack, a peculiarly
lumpy snake and told me to look inside.
Inside that double-hinged jaw, a frog's green
webbed hind feet were being drawn,
like a diver's, very slowly as if into deepest waters.
Perhaps thinking I might be considering rescue,
Maud said, "Don't. Frog is already elsewhere."

—GALWAY KINNELL

Galway Kinnell's eleventh collection of poems, Strong Is Your Hold, will be published this fall. He teaches writing at New York University.

In 2002 she initiated a process with the Department of Labor to design a national apprenticeship program for household managers. The first apprentice began training in June.

The institute doesn't advertise, but revenues from tuition and placement fees were up 35 percent last year compared with the year before. About a hundred students go through the school annually. And yet there is more demand for household and estate managers than there are trained candidates to meet it.

"People who have money will tell you the first thing they do is buy their dream car. It's usually red or black, and it's usually a convertible," Starkey told me. "And then they discover that they don't like standing out and having everyone in the world knowing who they are and what they're doing. So they get rid of the car and get something more low-profile. Same thing happens with homes. When they realize they have money, they buy a huge acreage and build a 35,000- or 55,000-square-foot home. Then they realize that they have to staff it."

Most families first try a local solution. But that almost inevitably falls short of what they need—they decide they don't want someone who's earning \$30,000 a year looking after \$40 million worth of stuff. Usually it's the woman of the house who has to deal with the situation, and she's driven to despair. ("The weariness of our clients is their common denominator," Starkey's assistant, Heili Lehr, told me.) "Then they come to me," Starkey says.

Starkey conducts a "site visit" to look for "patterns and priorities of what's important" to the family and develop a service-management plan. She starts by getting the lady and gentleman of the house in one place to talk about it, usually over dinner (they pay). During the meal she peppers them with questions: "What is your vision of service?" "What is your lifestyle and quality of life?" "Outline the family tree." The next day she inspects the property. She probes every room ("I open the drawers and look inside and underneath"), occasionally finding an "outrageous surprise"—a three-year-old child with a hundred pairs of shoes, perhaps, or a woman with scores of Judith Leiber purses in a closet "bigger than most people's houses." She asks more questions: "Do you have an entourage?" "Do you wear Armani or St. John" (or workout clothes)? "Do you eat ice cream late at night?" She also poses questions to herself: "Is she a micromanager?" (it usually is the woman), or "Who's got the power in the house?" (sometimes it's the dog). At the end of the visit, Starkey produces a document—it might run to forty-five pages—outlining what she thinks the family needs. If appropriate, she tries to make a match with one of her graduates. The positions she fills are strictly executive; the cleaners and cooks don't come through her. This is reflected in the tuition for her courses—about \$13,000 for eight weeks, including room and board—and in graduates' salaries, which range from about \$60,000 to \$150,000 a year (Starkey takes a 25 to 35 percent commission).

The motivation to hire someone at a hefty wage to look after the details of an estate has to do in part with what one financial adviser calls "asymmetric risk": for some, a

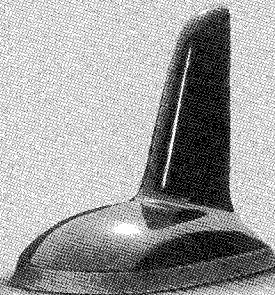
bad experience hosting a dinner party is more painful than losing money on the stock market. Starkey believes that as wealthy people become wealthier and more sophisticated in their expectations, demand for her graduates will continue to grow. She predicts that in twenty years there will be a service school in every major U.S. city.

One characteristic Starkey shares with others in the field is relentless positivity in the face of constant, almost pornographic displays of wealth. "I hope you're writing about how wonderful it all is," she said to me more than once. And it *is* wonderful—in the way that unapologetic evidence of the fruits of one's success can be both awe-inspiring and unseemly, not to say quintessentially American. (In the ultimate aspirational society, we love hard work, but we love flaunting it even more.)

Then, out of the blue during one of our later conversations, Natasha Pearl said something surprising: "If the income inequality persists, we could end up with real armed camps, like in South Africa." She said she was increasingly aware of the tension between the "haves" and the "have-nots," and she described a surge in demand among the ultrarich for real estate in out-of-the-way places such as New Zealand and rural Argentina—expensive insurance policies in case things go haywire for some reason at home. "The wise ones are thinking about it now," Pearl said. Indeed, it might be worth planning ahead; I wonder what the going salary will be for a spot in an oligarch's private army. ▀

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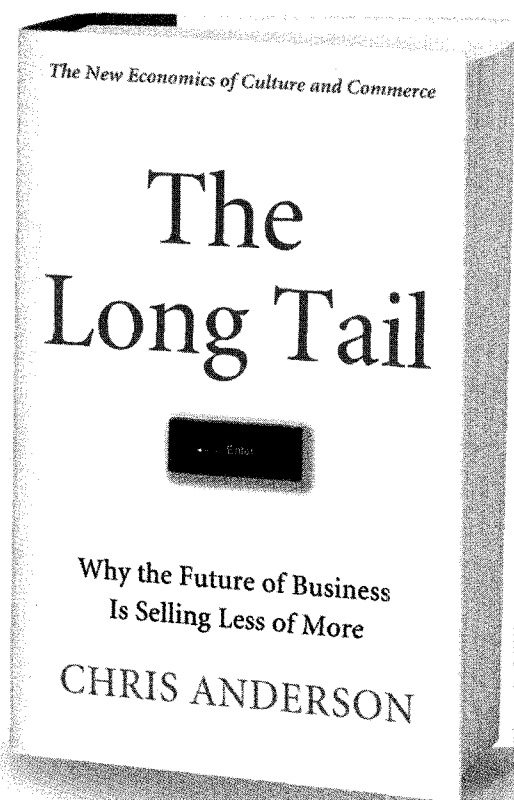
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FRAMING THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

by Chris Wickham

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Orson Agonistes

What to read this month

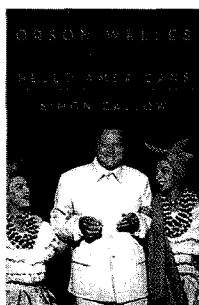
BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ



The wonder boy got everything he'd wanted, very quickly. Sixteen years after his birth in Kenosha, Orson Welles tramps to Dublin, then one of the world's great theatrical centers. Within two months he's starring at the Gate, the city's leading art theater, and "Young Welles" is the toast of the town. By eighteen, in 1933, not only has he joined Broadway's fanciest production company, he's signed up to play Marchbanks

in *Candida* and, astonishingly, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, thus snagging one of the most amazing breaks in theatrical history. At nineteen he's performing daily on CBS (radio, of course); within six months, in the depths of the Depression, his broadcast work is bringing him \$1,000 a week. At twenty he's adapting and directing an all-black "voodoo" *Macbeth* in Harlem. It's the sensation of New York. When he reaches voting

age he adapts, directs, and acts in a Broadway farce; directs and plays the lead in *Doctor Faustus*; and begins a two-year gig playing the Shadow on radio. Generations of kids will imitate his sinister chuckle. The year he would have graduated from college, he's cheating on his first wife and forming, with John Houseman, his own theater company, the Mercury Theatre, for which he produces, directs, and plays Brutus in a stripped-down, "fascist" *Julius Caesar*. It wins nearly universal accolades and is a gigantic box-office success. At twenty-three he's doing weekly *Mercury Theatre on the Air* broadcasts on CBS. His Halloween-evening production of *The War of the Worlds* sets off a national panic, and literally overnight Welles is world famous. Hollywood comes calling. At twenty-four he makes an unprecedented deal with RKO. They hand over the car keys: he'll



ORSON WELLES:
Hello Americans
by Simon Callow
Viking

shoot *his* script, with *his* actors (he brings with him to Los Angeles his Mercury troupe, including Jo Cotten, Aggie Moorehead, and Ray Collins), and edit it as *he* sees fit. ("There but for the grace of God, goes God," quipped one Hollywood wag, his future collaborator Herman J. Mankiewicz,

when he met the pampered brat from New York.) At twenty-five, given what he calls "the best train set a boy ever had"—the full run of a Hollywood studio—he produces, cowrites, directs, and stars in his first motion picture. Sixty-five years later it remains generally applauded as the greatest film of all time.

The second volume of Simon Callow's biography of Welles begins in May 1941, at the premiere of *Citizen Kane*. It ends nearly 450 pages and only seven years later. In that period Welles fully engaged his passions, if not always his talents. He shot five ambitious and innovative movies—one of which, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, his restrained and elegiac adaptation of Booth Tarkington's novel about the disintegration of the nineteenth-century provincial

ruling class, was sublime (he filmed it while simultaneously preparing for a documentary, acting in and supervising another picture on an adjacent soundstage, and starring weekly in *The Orson Welles Show* on radio). He transformed himself into a political commentator and crusader, writing a daily column for the *New York Post* and presenting a weekly current-affairs radio show (Welles's progressive views were a bit simplistic and self-important, but he comes off as a philosophe compared with the current Hollywood left). He doggedly attempted to start a new career as a radio comedian. He slept with countless women, though rarely with his second wife, Rita Hayworth (the press dubbed the couple "Beauty and the Brain"; Callow maintains that she "found herself married to possibly the only heterosexual man in the Western world who did not want to go to bed with her"). And he, a great showman who captivated a skeptical Clifford Odets with the confession "I have a touch of rhinestones in my blood," staged two vaudevillian extravaganzas: *The Mercury Wonder Show* (in which he, an accomplished magician, nightly sawed Marlene Dietrich in half before an audience of troops and munitions workers) and, on Broadway, *Around the World in 80 Days*. But despite this frenetic and diffuse activity, it was clear that after the premiere of *Kane*, Welles's supernatural run had ended.

This volume, in fact, attempts to answer "the most persistent question asked about Orson Welles: what went wrong after *Citizen Kane*?" In so doing, it chronicles the years in which one of the most extraordinary American lives utterly and permanently changed direction. And, concomitantly, it traces what David Thomson, the great film critic and historian, calls "one of the small tragedies of the 20th century": the terrible fate of *Ambersons*.

Callow is both well and poorly suited to tell this story. Welles has inspired an unusual number of good biographies. Thomson's uneven, eccentric, superbly written *Rosebud* remains the most astute assessment of Welles's work and personality; equally idiosyncratic, Peter Conrad's *Orson Welles: The Stories of His Life*

is smart but at times ponderous; Peter Bogdanovich's fat volume of interviews with Welles, as penetrating as it is tententious, covers most aspects of the subject's life and career; the lives by Frank Brady and Barbara Leaming are somewhat more workmanlike, though they tower above standard Hollywood portraits. But Callow's work in progress is a monument (he says he'll finish up with a third volume, though given the depth and detail of the first two, I'd guess he has a couple left to write). Doorstop biographies nearly always get mired in chronology and minutiae. Animated by a brisk intelligence, Callow's opus seldom does, although it now totals nearly 1,000 pages. He shapes and interprets his material and with panache places his story in rich context. Moreover, Callow is as indefatigable a researcher as he is stylish a writer—an indispensable trait, given that Welles shamelessly and consistently embellished his remarkable curriculum vitae. Even more important, Callow is exquisitely sensitive to the force—the seductiveness, the menace, the usefulness—of Welles's immense charm; as an actor and theatrical director, Callow grasps the captivating devotion Welles bestowed upon his players; as a homosexual, Callow grasps the beguiling power that the thoroughly heterosexual young Welles exercised on a series of influential gay men.

By far the most penetrating and original aspect of both volumes is Callow's vivid scrutiny of Welles's work in the theater—I've never read accounts of long-vanished stage productions that equal the immediacy and precision of Callow's—and on radio ("the medium," Callow reminds us, in which Welles "earned a living for most of his professional life"). But Callow, a man primarily of the English stage (though many Americans know him best as the hammy, kilted homosexual in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*), falters the farther he gets from his milieu. He lavishes many pages on Welles's political activity, for instance, but has little understanding of the history of American politics (Helen Gahagan Douglas was a liberal Democrat, but she was hardly a "radical," as Callow avers and as the young senatorial candidate Richard Nixon tried to

tar her; Truman was a creature of Tom Pendergast's Kansas City Democratic political organization, not of the "southern Democratic machine").

Far more crucial, Callow loses his sure touch when he examines the film work of Welles, which is, after all, that genius's supreme artistic achievement. Without a commanding and subtle grasp of the technical and formal aspects of moviemaking, Callow, in analyzing Welles's pictures, fails to employ the acumen and grace he brings to his assessment of Welles's theatrical productions. Instead he resorts to lengthy summaries of plots and reviews—the very kind of bloated, unfocused approach he otherwise eschews. For all his insight into theatrical acting style and method, he, alas, fails (in both volumes) to illuminate and analyze with originality Welles's most important collaboration as a director with an actor: his film work in *Kane* and *Ambersons* with Moorehead, whom he pronounced "the best actor I've ever known" (she's the cynosure in what Thomson memorably calls "the two most indelibly humane moments" in Welles's oeuvre). This is all the more disappointing in that Callow has actually written books on the two directors who most treasured her, Welles and Charles Laughton.

Not at home in the history and culture of Hollywood and, it seems, fundamentally indifferent to the movies, Callow brings few new insights to the much-discussed, pivotal event of the years covered in this volume: Welles's fateful decision to leave *Ambersons* without finishing the film's all-important postproduction work, in order to fly to Rio to film the Carnival for a wartime documentary the government had asked him to direct in support of inter-American unity. For Welles, the South America trip was equal parts patriotic gesture, serious attempt to make something like an anthropological art film, and sybaritic boondoggle. Indisputably, though, his adventure there destroyed his already-fragile relationship with RKO (the company was footing the bill) and led to the studio's evisceration of *Ambersons*—RKO cut nearly an hour from the film, diminishing it from 131 minutes to eighty-eight, and the studio

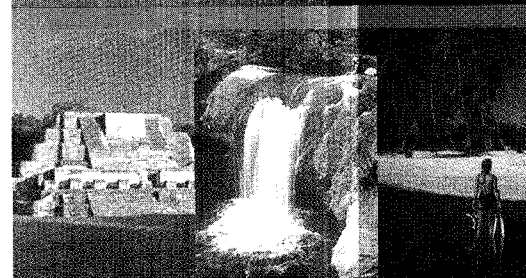
inserted new material that was neither written nor directed by Welles.

The adulterated fragment contains some of the finest moments in the history of the cinema (most famously Moorehead's "strawberry shortcake" scene, Welles's own poignant and witty narration, and the truncated but still lyrical ballroom sequence—the original sequence, a single tracking shot, was, Welles later maintained, "the greatest tour de force of my career"). But many cineastes agree with Thomson that the uncut movie, had it survived, "would now be regarded as the greatest film ever made" (Robert Carringer's painstaking *Magnificent Ambersons: A Reconstruction*, based on the studio's continuity script, surviving storyboards, and stills of missing scenes, gives the clearest sense of the original movie). At the time, the "giant boy," as Welles was often called, seems to have been too absorbed in his pleasures and projects to apprehend fully the ramifications of the destruction of *Ambersons*—and his own role in that destruction. Four decades later he would recognize, as his film archivist recounted, that it "was the worst thing that had happened to him in his life."

Welles would go on, in at first a headlong and later a bravely hopeful way, and, as Callow recounts here and as he will recount in subsequent volumes, Welles would make movies with flashes and aspects of great beauty and brilliance (most notably, I think, his *Othello* and *Chimes at Midnight*). But in all his subsequent efforts he was, as Callow discerningly remarks, essentially "an experimental artist, deeply unconcerned with ... the idea of a finished artwork." When not yet a man, Welles had made two pictures that were carefully wrought masterpieces, but, submitting to his own boyish and wanton profligacy, he had helped ruin the second before it was born. That he afterward shrank from the pursuit of perfection seems inarguable. Surely in large part, as Callow maintains, Welles's character—his anarchic and "exploratory urges"—was his fate. But Callow doesn't acknowledge the toll Welles's chosen medium itself exacted. That perfect ballroom sequence lasted maybe fifteen minutes on film. It took nine ten-hour days



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to shoot. Moviemaking is colossally complex, constantly frustrating, a torment that engenders frenzy and despair. In such a realm, to have perfection within one's grasp, as Welles had with *Amber-sons*, and then recklessly be a party in its demolition would break any artist, especially one who had climbed so far on merely prodigious talent and good fortune. Welles could never summon the wherewithal for another attempt.

Framing the Early Middle Ages, by Chris Wickham (Oxford). Historical research incessantly accrues, but at certain times the study of a particular subject or era enters a period of unique originality and brilliance. The 1960s and 1970s proved to be a golden age for the study of both American slavery and British imperialism; the 1950s was such a time for scholarship on European intellectual history. Since the 1990s, the historical profession's most spectacular achievement has probably been the study of late antiquity—the period in Europe and the Mediterranean world between A.D. 250 and 800, which saw the end of classical civilization as well as the triumph of Christianity and Islam.

The research has been both voluminous—the archaeological picture for some countries has grown a hundred-fold—and transformative. Historians have profoundly altered their understanding of religious, cultural, intellectual, social, economic, and even military developments, and with it their understanding of, say, the fluidity between barbarian and classical societies, between Islam and Christendom, between paganism and Christianity, and between Eastern and Western Christendom. This historiographical explosion shows no sign of ending, perhaps because the dynamism of the subject fuels the dynamism of the research: ultimately, the scholars are attempting to fathom far-reaching historical change, and although it's true that all of history is marked by flux and transition, this period is especially so. (One of the myriad fundamental questions historians are wrestling with, for instance, is the rather obvious but terrifically complex one of how societies in northern Europe absorbed a religion whose outlook had

been shaped in the Middle East and the Mediterranean.)

That two lasting works of synthesis—both marked by stunning sweep and analytical depth—have been published in three years attests to the fecundity and vitality of this scholarship. The radically revised *Rise of Western Christendom*, by the doyen of the field, Peter Brown, distilled a generation of scholarship on late antiquity, concentrating on cultural history, specifically the processes by which Christianity rose to dominate western Europe. Now Chris Wickham, an Oxford historian, has published his summa, a history of the period between A.D. 400 and 800 that almost wholly ignores cultural and religious matters, concentrating instead on socioeconomic change. A work that comparatively examines ten regions (Denmark, Ireland, England and Wales, Gaul, Spain, Italy, North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Palestine, and the Byzantine heartland of Anatolia and Greece), it assesses such matters as state structures, the aristocracy and the peasantry, urbanism, and above all systems of exchange. It's usually clearly written, and often cleverly so, though as a systematic, Marxian history, it's always intellectually demanding and hence slow reading (it took me forever to finish its nearly 1,000 pages). But while few general readers will peruse it (and at \$175, it's aimed exclusively at academic libraries and the largest public ones), history doesn't get any better.

Inventively and commandingly integrating documentary and archaeological sources, Wickham carefully compares the intricate and often patchy evidence, revealing the complexity of the societies and changes he's probing (most crucially, the innumerable and multifaceted social ramifications of the contraction of trade and taxation that attended the gradual fragmenting of the Roman Empire). More than almost any history I've read, Wickham's manages to be at once grand and rigorous. In its adroit and confident treatment of an array of subjects and disciplines, and in its exhaustive bibliography, this book, like Brown's, has encapsulated and synthesized a burgeoning field of scholarship at the point of perhaps its greatest creativity. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.

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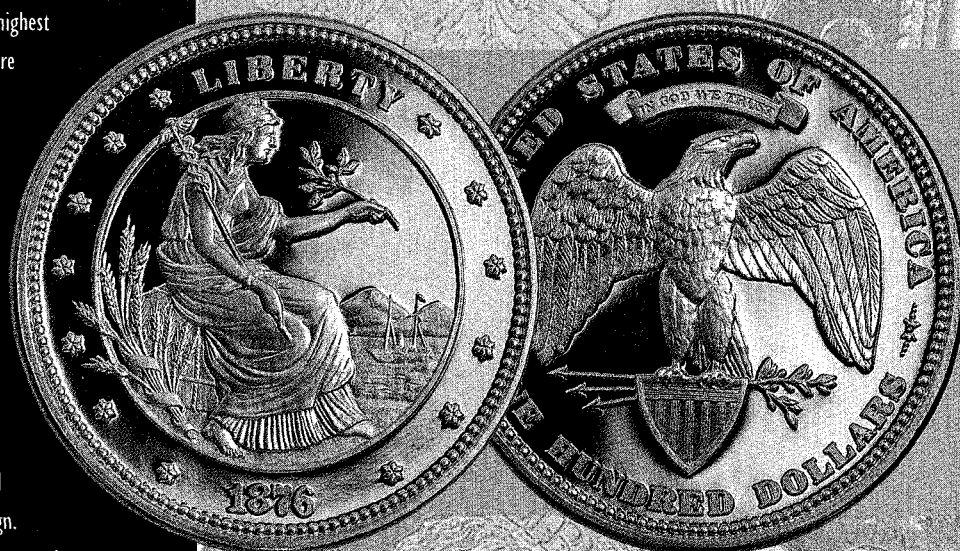
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BOOKS

Feckless Youth

What Kennedy magic?

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

There was something more than tawdry about the detention in Washington last May of Representative Patrick Kennedy, Democrat of Rhode Island. Having long been the butt of jokes about his inability to find his way to the Capitol unaided, he smashed his car into a Hill security barrier at 2:45 in the morning, claiming to be in a hurry to vote long after all his fellow congressmen were in bed. Avoiding an on-the-spot sobriety test, and later dodging allegations about his attendance at the nearby Hawk 'n Dove drinking establishment, he claimed a just-then-fashionable addiction to the sleep aid Ambien and vanished into the Mayo Clinic. On his emergence, he gave a press conference at Brown University and asserted that he'd received no special treatment from the police. "I expect at the end of the day to have made sure that I will have done the same thing in terms of the charges, in terms of bookings, in terms of mug shots, fingerprints, whatever they might have me do, if [I] were an African American in Anacostia and were picked up," he managed to say, before comparing his struggle to help addicts to the earlier battles of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It was reported that, at Brown at any rate, his remarks won him a standing ovation.

There was such a good match between this little Kennedy fiasco and so many, many preceding ones, from Martha's Vineyard to Palm Beach, that the press in its coverage reflected its own almost trance-like state. Why, here was a story that almost wrote itself. Meanwhile, the publishing industry continues to find that there is a never-ending market for books that feature the Kennedys as either "magic" or "royalty." (Recent developments among the delinquent progeny of Queen Elizabeth II admittedly make this comparison, insulting as it is to republican virtues, considerably more plausible.)

Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of the Kennedy "charisma" without the

Court of St. James's and the associated radiance diffused by the British aristocracy. Joseph Kennedy, the resentful patriarch who sponsored the political careers of at least his male issue, may have been hated by the British for his pro-Hitler sympathies while serving at the embassy in Grosvenor Square but, as Professor James Giglio points out, he did know how to be lavish and obsequious when he had to be. Seizing hold of young Jack's 1940 Harvard senior thesis, handing it to Arthur Krock of *The New York Times* for a rewrite and persuading Henry Luce to write a foreword, then portentously retitling it *Why England Slept*, the assiduous envoy finally had it gift-wrapped and sent around to Buckingham Palace and many of the great houses of London. As he wrote to Jack: "You would be surprised how a book that really makes the grade with high-class people stands you in good stead for years to come."

This grating *arrivisme* points up an ambivalence in the discrepant Anglo-American usages of the term *class*. On this side of the Atlantic, the word means "style" or perhaps "poise" or "polish," as in *classy* or *a class act*. On the English side, it can now mean that too, but it also (especially with the prefix *high-*)

means "class" as in hereditary status. The great merit of Barbara Leaming's new book is to demonstrate how dependent the young Kennedy became upon a charmed circle of British noblemen, and also how obsessed he became with the need to match himself with that greatest of Anglo-American aristocrats, Winston Churchill. When he first visited England, in the 1930s, his sister Kathleen, known as "Kick," had already been an unusually well-accepted American guest in British town- and country-house circles. She later (over the strong Catholic sectarian objections of her mother, Rose) married the Marquess of Hartington, eldest son and heir of the Duke of Devonshire. When Hartington was killed, in Belgium in September 1944, the dukedom passed to his younger brother, Andrew (whose widow, Deborah Mitford, is now the last survivor of the most astonishing set of English sisters since the Brontës). One almost needs to draw a family tree at this point, but Harold Macmillan—later prime minister—was married to the Duke of Devonshire's daughter, and Sir David Ormsby-Gore—later Macmillan's ambassador to Washington—was a cousin of Andrew Devonshire's and had a sister to whom Macmillan was also father-in-law.



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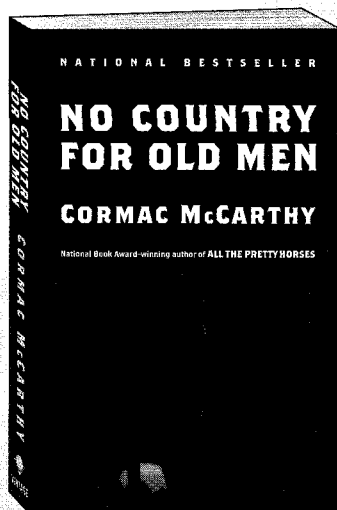
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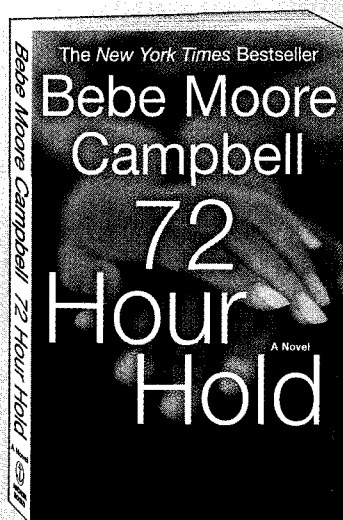
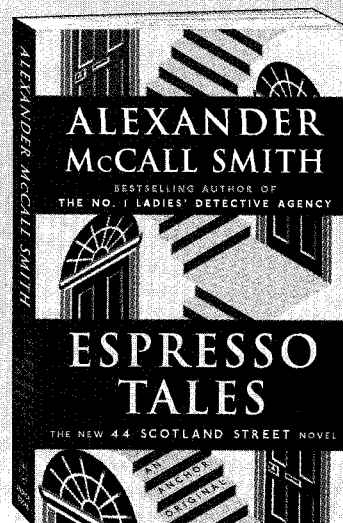
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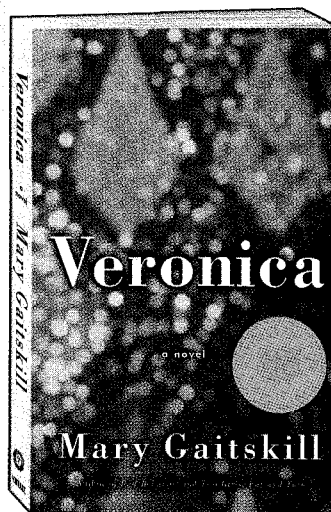
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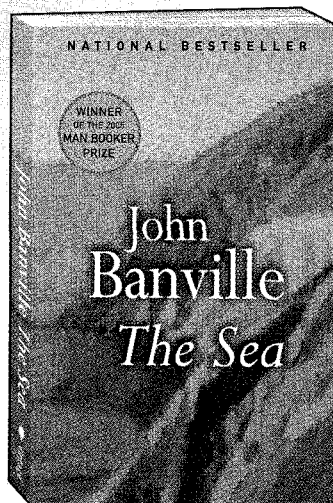
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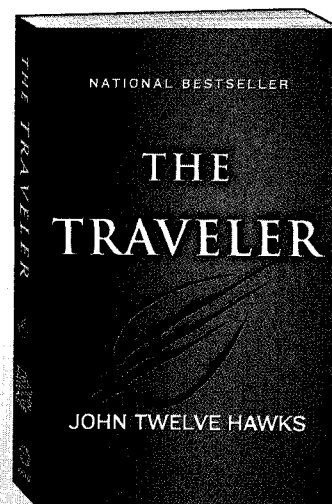
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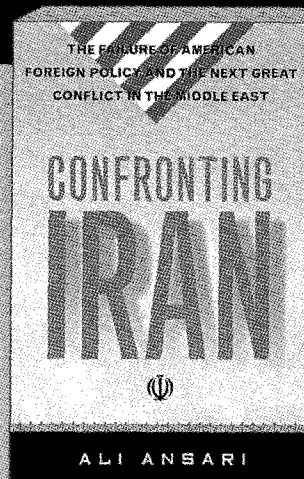
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BASIC BOOKS

Whether "in-" or not, this certainly constitutes "breeding," and conforms to most people's notion of "class" or "dynasty."

This influential group had generally identified with the pro-Churchill Tory minority against Baldwin and Chamberlain, had generally performed well in the Second World War, and was to become politically central in the years when young John Kennedy was emerging as a congressman and senator. While Kennedy was making his compromises with Joe McCarthy, taking positions against Western colonialism, and accusing Eisenhower and Nixon of being soft on communism, these Tory aristos were trying to manage the orderly decline of the British postwar empire, and to prevent their nation from further bankrupting itself in an arms race in which it was too insolvent to compete.

Leaming's book is absorbing in showing the young Kennedy's devotion to his widowed sister (whose bereavement occurred at almost the same time as the death, on a flying mission, of Joseph Kennedy Jr.). It also shows that the young JFK privately sympathized with his father, throughout most of the war, in believing England to be decadent, doomed, and—always a key word with him—*old*. But when it later came to suit him, he borrowed the imagery of Munich all over again, and sought to evoke the sternest Churchillian echo that he could contrive. The British establishment in 1960 had every reason to welcome the election of a man who was in some sense "our American cousin." But it then found that his impetuosity and opportunism made the asset somewhat volatile.

Upon me the principal effect of reading this book was a renewed distaste for the vindictiveness of Republicans in passing the Twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution in 1951. Had President Eisenhower been able to seek and win a third term, there is some reason to

hope that we might have been spared the Bay of Pigs and been allowed a chance to reconsider the rash commitment in Indochina. The man who detested McCarthy, warned against the "military-industrial complex," and sent troops to Little Rock, moreover, would have had less to prove, and less to fear, in confrontations with jittery hawks, or with racist Democratic governors after the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. More than this, Richard Nixon would have been less likely to emerge as a natural GOP successor, or to feel cheated by the Kennedy fam-

ily's dirty work in Cook County during the 1960 election. Just think what we might have skipped ...

Daydreaming to one side, Eisenhower did accidentally do one thing that made the JFK presidency easier. In October 1956 he swiftly put an end to the illusions of Anglo-French colonialism in the Suez War. And having done that, he further intervened to condition the choice of Harold Macmillan as the successor to Sir Anthony Eden. His instrument in doing this was Winthrop Aldrich, a Rockefeller scion who then occupied

JACK KENNEDY:
The Education of a Statesman
by Barbara Leaming
W. W. Norton

LET EVERY NATION KNOW:
John F. Kennedy in His Own Words
by Robert Dallek and Terry Golway
Sourcebooks Media Fusion

THE KENNEDY MYSTIQUE:
Creating Camelot
National Geographic Society

THE BYSTANDER:
John F. Kennedy and the Struggle for Black Equality
by Nick Bryant
Basic Books

THE PRESIDENCY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY
by James N. Giglio
University Press of Kansas

Joseph Kennedy's old roost as American ambassador in London. Leaming does not mention any of this, but then her subject is not the American native aristocracy, and despite her many virtues, she is still one of those who think that we should have paid any price, borne any burden to have been allowed to be reverent spectators at "Camelot." (The new volume subtitled *Creating Camelot* is just that: an unembarrassed account by men like the late Hugh Sidey of *Time* of how the "Jack"/"Jackie" household was served by the press at the time, and of how it has been airbrushed and whitewashed since.)

I once sat on a panel with Pierre Salinger, to discuss Oliver Stone's ridiculous Oedipal epic about the slaying of the noble father of the '60s generation. Salinger

READING LIST

ESTABLISHING SHOTS

Why certain picture books are always in style with style makers

BY SALLY SINGER

They teach you to doctor denim

like a pro ... or a member of a Swiss biker gang. Karlheinz Weinberger's *Photos 1954–1995* is the Zurich-based photographer's obsessive record of how outlaw style in the Alps evolved from proto-psychobilly (drainpipe jeans—the flies held together by chains, rivets, or actual horseshoes—worn with prize-fighter belts bearing Elvis's mug), to rebellious hippie (on top: matelot stripes under painted denim vests or intriguing layerings of fishnet, leather, ski knits, and SS paraphernalia; below: ass-hugging distressed jeans tucked into soft-leather cowboy boots), to Mitteleuropa Hell's Angels (tattoos, guts, and furry helmets with Viking horns). A volume of enduring fascination for designers seeking to build a better beaten-up jean and photographers looking for new ways to shoot fashion's most basic basic.

They show you how to prop a shoot on a budget ...

Sam Haskins's *Five Girls* is a quirky volume from 1962 in which a quintet of semi-naked, fetchingly unself-conscious lovelies cavort with simple objects—among them a small mirror, a chair, and a beach ball. Notwithstanding lashings of false eyelashes and gallons of liquid liner (this was the '60s, after all), these girls are now icons of self-delight. (And self-delight is of course the essence of fashion; why else buy something cute from Marni or Miu Miu?) Haskins, a South African known largely for his commercial work, is also responsible for *Cowboy Kate* (1964, to be reissued this October by Rizzoli), a deliciously cheesy soft-core study—of a back-combed, big-eyed beauty wearing little more than a gun belt and a Stetson—that fashion styl-ists turn to again and again when trying to make bland Hollywood stars look as edgy as that other wild Kate, Ms. Moss.

They do sporty-yet-tailored-plus-cornrows better than David Beckham ...

Jamel Shabazz's *Time Before Crack* documents black New York in the years before the late-'80s drug devastation set in, a time when men in Crown Heights and Flatbush wore trilbies with track pants, sweatshirts with

pin-striped suits. Shabazz, a former corrections officer at Rikers Island (whose earlier volume of work *Back in the Days* is the go-to manual for how to look roots hip-hop), sought to document a community on the brink of decline, but perhaps more important ensured that a to-die-for, hi-lo, hipster-fogey style would live on forever (particularly on the inspiration boards of certain European designers).

They promote the pleasures of dressing up ...

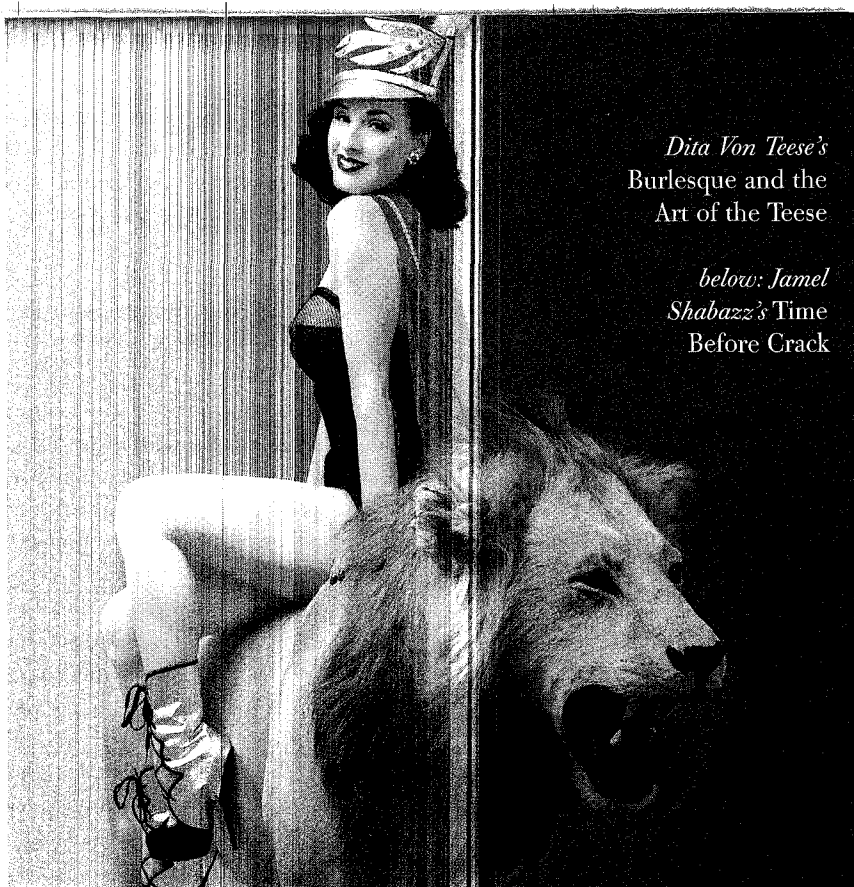
even if only to strip it all off. The fashion community's fancy for Dita Von Teese—Bettie Page doppelgänger, wife of Marilyn Manson, and skilled champagne-glass skinny-dipper—is boundless and has, of late, brought back corseted waists and platformed soles. Her recent book, which can be entered from either the front or the back (yikes!) and thus has two titles (*Burlesque and the Art of the Teese* and *Fetish and the Art of the Teese*), discloses her most chic secrets, including how to powder one's nose—or one's latex catsuit.

They remind you that before there was fashion, there was texture, pattern, color, and shape ...

as seen, for example, in the robber crab or the reticulated python or the violescent sea whip or the eagle stones to be found in Albertus Seba's *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities*. Seba, a Dutch pharmacist, commissioned

*Dita Von Teese's
Burlesque and the
Art of the Teese*

*below: Jamel
Shabazz's Time
Before Crack*



illustrations of every one of the natural—and often grotesque—specimens that he collected. This spectacular volume contains every plate made between 1734 and 1765, and it underlies the recent trend in high fashion toward the quirky and the *wunderkammer*-ish: i.e., wearing or carrying stuff that looks like it might have been scavenged at Tulum or from the steamer trunk of your monkey-fur-wearing great-great-aunt.

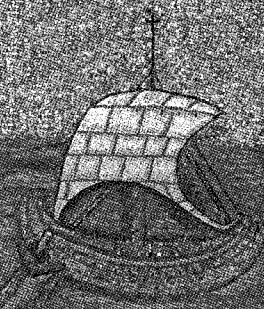
Sally Singer is the fashion news and features director at Vogue.

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was enraged by an anachronism in the movie, showing anti-Kennedy elements jeering about the end of "Camelot" as they heard the news of the assassination. Though this objection was formally correct—it wasn't until Mrs. Kennedy praised the fourth-rate Lerner and Loewe musical to Theodore White very soon after Dallas that we became oppressed with this foolish image—I thought it was fantastically ungrateful of Salinger to protest at any currency for the expression that had allowed him such a long and undeserved career as an expert. But he was nonetheless right. There is, in retrospect, every reason to understand why a model of courtliness and chivalry, and grace in warfare—even a showbiz one—would have been completely inapplicable to the Kennedy administration as it actually was.

What several of these books combine to show—sometimes but not always unintentionally—is that the three years of the JFK regime were consumed by extraordinary hyperactivity on two fronts, and by extraordinary torpidity on two others. The hyperactivity consisted of continuous and stressful "crisis management," often necessitated by self-induced crises, and reflected a picture of narcotic and sexual debauchery within the White House that still has the power to make one whistle. The torpor concerned two "macro" subjects—the pursuit of a nuclear test-ban treaty and the adoption by the administration and Congress of a serious position on civil rights—that really were both urgent and overdue.

The contrast between the two tendencies could not easily be greater. Having defamed Eisenhower and Nixon as appeasers, on the basis of a falsified "missile gap," and having used the Munich analogy—in which he had not believed when it might have counted—as a continuous trope, the newly elected Kennedy was at a loss to find scope for his poor man's Churchillianism. He encountered an additional difficulty. Winston Churchill himself—giver of the famous Fulton speech about the Iron Curtain—had become convinced after the death of Stalin and the Hungarian revolution that a more accommodating Soviet leadership was, if not actual, certainly possible. The old man also believed that the development of weapons of mass destruction

had changed everything. He was largely seconded in both views by Harold Macmillan and Sir David Ormsby-Gore.

The man against whom Kennedy was historically ranged, or felt himself to be, was Nikita Khrushchev. In spite of much boorishness and demagoguery—partly undertaken to conceal the increasing lack of confidence that the USSR and the Communist movement felt after his own "secret speech" concerning the crimes of Stalinism—Khrushchev was, probably no less than his eventual successor Gorbachev, a man with whom, at a minimum, business could be done. Had it not been for the stupidity of the CIA (how often one has recourse to those words) in sending a U-2 spy plane into Russian airspace just as Eisenhower and Khrushchev were about to meet in Paris, there might well have been a ban on atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons and a consummating visit by Eisenhower to Moscow. But Kennedy, eager to prove himself in turn, and to live up to his inflated campaign rhetoric, was far too willing to listen to the CIA when it came to Cuba and the Congo, and far too inclined to view every meeting with the Soviet chairman as a test of his own will and energy and strength.

The misgiving he must have felt about those very qualities is now a doubt that we must all share. At practically all material times, the Galahad of Camelot was pumped full of drugs that affected his mental and physical ability, and was concomitantly obsessed with a need to demonstrate "potency." That this led him to adopt something like a Marilyn Monroe doctrine is indubitable. Even the smitten Barbara Leaming is shocked to note on how many vital occasions the president of the United States was closeted with his official procurer, David Powers, and a couple of hired women. Eros may be a tried and tested way to ward off Thanatos, but it is alarming to discover from Leaming's book how long Kennedy had brooded on the likely brevity of his own disease-haunted life, and how casually this allowed him to gamble with Thanatos for other people.

Professor Robert Dallek evidently hopes to step into the shoes vacated by Salinger, Sorensen, Schlesinger, and the rest, and now makes a Zelig-like appearance in all JFK anthologies, but

his last book made it agonizingly clear that Kennedy was in no sense competent to be the chief executive, and that after being too sick and too crazed with dope to handle the celebrated confrontation with Khrushchev in Vienna, he resolved abruptly to pick a macho fight in Indochina. This would have been bad enough in itself, but he also made a hostage of his own honor—and ours—by sleeping with the gun moll Judith Exner at the very same time when she was the mistress of the mobster Sam Giancana, and when Mr. Giancana and other Cosa Nostra elements were the executors of the Kennedy administration's deranged policy in Cuba. Has any president ever sunk so low? And who will still maintain that this was a private peccadillo?

I do not know for sure when the avuncular Harold Macmillan came to realize that so much of his role was going to involve careful and therapeutic hand-holding in between storms of narcissism and poll-driven mood swings. (Most historians date this to the moment when the brash young president informed the moustachioed last of the Edwardians that if he didn't have a woman every three days he would suffer from a headache or—deferring to one account I once heard—a nosebleed.) The old man noted presciently in his diary, "Kennedy got elected by attacking Eisenhower as 'weak' and on his slogan 'Wake up America!' So, elected on the Churchill ticket, he will now be accused of following a Chamberlain policy."

Every time the British thought that a test-ban treaty was within political reach, they were made to appreciate that Kennedy was the first of the absolutely image-conscious, media-savvy, sales-oriented generation. Those of us who hate the dull and sordid world of the professional "handler" must date our mourning from the moment when the TV camera decided that it loved JFK. Several opportunities for a negotiated end to the nuclear standoff were missed, and the proposal that was eventually accepted (involving mutual force reductions in Cuba and Turkey) had to be kept secret by the Kennedy clan because its terms were so ignominious and because it had been purchased at the high price of a terrifying and needless risk of

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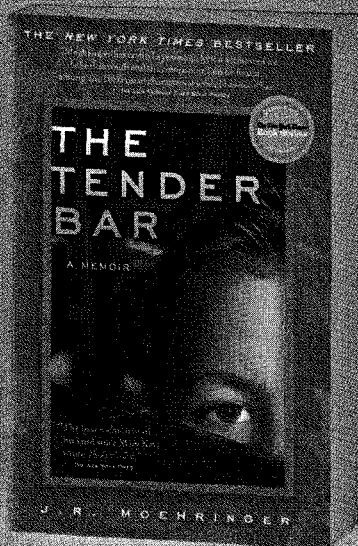
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thermonuclear war. The man who did the most to defuse the October 1962 crisis, as well as make it redound to the credit of the United States, was Adlai Stevenson at the UN, and when the nightmare was over, the Kennedy brothers maliciously put it about that this great public servant, too, had "wanted a Munich."

At least since the 1954 *Brown* decision, and certainly since Eisenhower's show of force at Little Rock, it had become clear that the continued existence of the American South as a postbellum plantation was impossible as well as undesirable. But after 1960 the president and his fraternal attorney general, both of them charged to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, did not find it convenient to face the facts. As Nick Bryant shows in his admirable book, they saw themselves as highly dependent on Dixiecrat votes, in the country and in Congress, for reelection. And they regarded, not the insufferable status quo, but the "agitators" among black Americans, as the problem. The squalor and risk of their personal lives had also put them under the fell influence of J. Edgar Hoover, who knew how they were behaving and who regarded the civil-rights movement as a political enemy and Dr. Martin Luther King as a personal one. Given the hagiography that has enveloped the Kennedys ever since, it would come as a shock to many people to read that, faced with the historic March on Washington, in 1963, the Kennedys expended most of their effort in trying to get it called off.

That this should be the case, so shamefully late in the day, would be clear to anyone reading Bryant's especially fine chapter on the desegregation of the University of Mississippi. Confronted by a Democratic governor who not only declined to enforce the law but actually employed force to defy it and break it, the Kennedy White House treated the man as if he were a full-dress foreign potentate who needed to be, well, appeased. Brave enough when commissioning the covert murder of Diem in Vietnam or Castro in Havana, the Knights of the Round Table became shift and fawning when it was their job to guarantee equality before the law. The university treated James Meredith as a nuisance when he tried to register, and several times turned

him away while constitutionally mandated forces stood awkwardly by. Consistently—Bryant is good on this too—the Kennedy administration was publicly outflanked on the issue by none other than Nelson Rockefeller. Perhaps, then, there are times when noblesse oblige is a better principle than mere populism and compromise. But let's have no more servile babble about "American royalty" in the face of this record.

Looking at the extraordinary contrast—between what is now known of the Kennedy administration and the continuing infatuation with it—one is drawn to an explanation of the difference that may still be slightly delicate to mention. If this vulgar hoodlum president had not been survived by a widow of exceptional bearing and grace, his reputation would probably now be dirt. Sheer discretion and consideration, exerted on her behalf (and partly demanded by her in return for "access"), conditioned many of the founding chronicles and continue to influence the successor ones. Perhaps even this spell is now not too strong to be broken. Professor Giglio approaches the question, at last, in a matter-of-fact way. We have all understood for a long time that Kennedy did not even attempt to shield his wife from the humiliation caused by his whorings. He seldom invited her to bear him company on his out-of-town forays, and she often declined to accompany him. I had not appreciated, though, that until November 22, 1963, she had never been at his side on a domestic presidential political trip. And she might have missed that one, too, had it not been felt that a charm offensive was needed to heal the breach in the Texas Democratic Party, and had she not just spent too much time being photographed half naked on the cruise ship of her future husband Aristotle Onassis. On the first couple's last night in the White House together prior to departure for Dallas, staff and press accounts coincide in reporting an emotional row on the Grand Staircase. And the next day, she had parts of his skull in her hands. But all this was almost half a century ago, which is surely enough time for the dispelling of our remaining illusions. ▀

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a columnist for Vanity Fair.

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BOOKS

Zip It

Erica Jong's stunning self-absorption

BY CRISTINA NEHRING

Attention, Bill Clinton. Erica Jong is waiting for your call. "I can't get in touch with Bill," she announces in her most recent memoir. "He has to get in touch with me." She does everything short of giving her phone number. She agonizes about pleasing him in the sheets ("I wonder if I'm trashy enough"). She reassures him she's cleared things with her spouse ("My husband is cool about our affair").

No matter that it's been three decades since Jong published *Fear of Flying*, the book that presumably emboldens her to proposition American presidents. It careened to the top of best-seller lists after its publication in 1973, revolutionized the way people thought about women's erotic desire, provoked translations into two-and-a-half-dozen languages, and turned its thirtysomething author into a celebrity. It also drove her to eternal self-imitation. Each of the seventeen books Erica Jong has written since has been an increasingly desperate postscript to her first novel.

Fear of Flying itself was a good book. And this even though—or perhaps because—its reputation departs radically from its reality. It is my suspicion that the majority of the 18 million people who bought it didn't read it, or read only the paragraphs on which its notoriety was based. This means the passage about "zipless fucks" in which Isadora Wing (minutely based, like all of Jong's narrators, on herself) details her fantasy of elated anonymous sex—sex without strings, preambles, or consequences; sex with a stranger on a train, an itinerant Romeo who comes, sees, conquers, and disappears into the mists of the station. "The zipless fuck was more than a fuck," intones Isadora. "It was a platonic ideal. Zipless because when you came together zippers fell

away like rose petals ... Your whole soul flowed out through your tongue." "And," she adds abruptly four pages later, "I have never had one."

But the book's whole mythology depends on the availability—and ecstasy—of the zipless fuck. It is because of this availability that numbers of women left their husbands in the glory years of *Fear of Flying*, and that men sent Jong requests for underwear. It was, after all, the middle of the sexual revolution. The birth-control pill had been approved in 1960. By 1966, Masters and Johnson had announced that traditional sexual intercourse was, for half the human race, antilimactic. *The Hite Report* confirmed as much a few years later. Many a young woman felt invited—or compelled—to embrace erotic experiment. But with possibility came fear—not least, fear of ignorance. Suddenly everybody wanted to know what they should be doing, and feeling, in bed. *The Joy of Sex* appeared on coffee tables across the nation. First-hand accounts of women's desire were at a premium.

Enter Erica Jong and her zipless fuck. But here's an irony: *Fear of Flying* demonstrates the unavailability of the zipless

fuck. Far from being an inspirational story (as it is routinely billed) of a woman's escape from a dead marriage and discovery of erotic pleasure and independence, it's the tale of a woman who ditches her husband only to find in the arms of a lover first impotence and frustration, then heartbreak and abandonment. The end of the novel has Jong's protagonist returning ruefully to her spouse: she stalks him around European capitals, begs a receptionist for the key to his hotel room, and admits herself into his bathtub in anticipation of his arrival. As an image of female liberation, it's hardly up to snuff. The heroine—naked and prone—awaits the forgiveness of her husband. Not flying in the open skies, as the novel's title (and Isadora's surname) suggests she might—but waterlogged in the lavatory of a man. (Improbably, Jong herself appears to mistake her novel's closing scene for a vision of freedom. "I wasn't going to grovel," she has Isadora boast as she reclines in Mr. Wing's steaming bath. No? If not, it could only be because she knows the man she married is sufficiently weak to take her back without any elaborate rituals of contrition.)

But if *Fear of Flying* is hardly a tale of women's emancipation, it nonetheless raises arrestingly honest questions about desire and commitment, fantasy



SEDUCING
THE DEMON:
Writing for My Life
by Erica Jong
Jeremy P. Tarcher/
Penguin

FEAR OF FLYING
by Erica Jong
Signet

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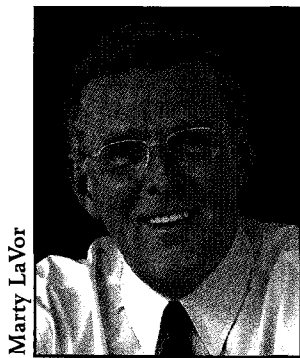
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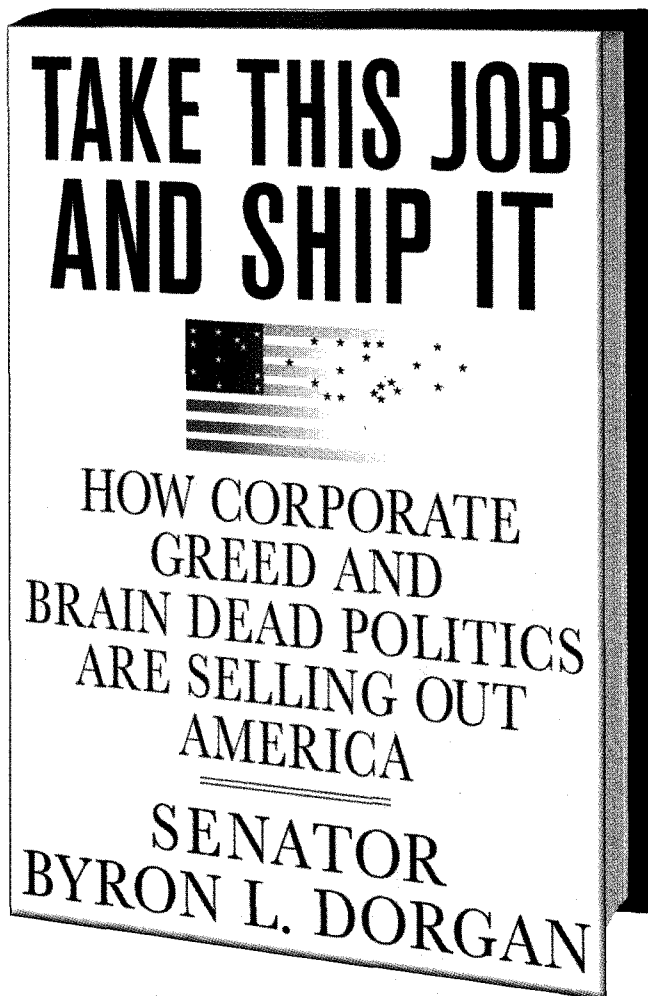
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and fidelity. It is this honesty, along with the protagonist's boisterous energy and foul-mouthed wit, that once made the book remarkable. "What *was* it about marriage anyway?" Isadora asked. "Even if you loved your husband, there came that inevitable year when fucking him turned as bland as Velveeta cheese: filling, fattening even, but no thrill to the taste buds, no bittersweet edge." Jong put her finger on a real wound. But the only salve she's offered over the next seventeen books is that of interminable adultery. And spread over the decades, that salve gets both thinner and more bitter. The voice in Jong's latest book, *Seducing the Demon: Writing for My Life*, is no longer the voice of her spunky first heroine. It is a cynical voice—a catty, peeved, snobbish, bored, and boring voice. It is the voice of a woman who, for all her talk of love, has never learned to love. Jong in her sixties is at once too much and too little like Jong in her thirties.

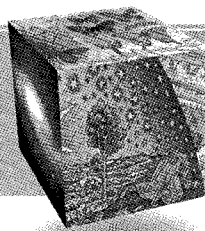
Seducing the Demon aims to double as autobiography and writer's guide. Short lists of rules for "fledgling writers" ("Forget intellect"; "There are no rules") alternate with lengthy recyclings of the author's old affairs. Sisyphean repetition has been Jong's formula since her first novel, but with each enlistment the formula grows feebler and Jong's memory dimmer. The anecdotes are darkened, their author sounds nastier, and the honesty that was once her peculiar virtue hardens into a pose.

Consider the tale of "Dart," as Jong calls one of her more significant others in *Seducing the Demon*. He was known as "Bean" in her 1984 novel, *Parachutes and Kisses*, and identified in *Fear of Fifty* by his full roman-numeraled name, Will Wadsworth Oates III (not to mention by his curved penis—anatomy always being a more faithful mnemonic device for Jong than psychology). In *Parachutes*, Bean is portrayed as the heroine's soul mate: for 400 pages he treats her like gold, and she sobs that she "never" wants them "to be parted." By *Fear of Fifty*, her prince has morphed into a boy toy she spots "on a Nautilus machine." He is still, however, "essentially kind," and supports her fiercely through a breast-cancer scare—even after she has rebuffed his marriage proposals and

tired of him. Reenter Dart in *Seducing the Demon*. By now a two-decade-old memory for Jong, he has transformed into a monster. Mean, lecherous, and stupid, he now meets her by crashing his vehicle into her house. When he attempts to renew their friendship as she is writing *Demon*, she casts him away brutally: "Dart had lost his looks, his youth. He was no longer twenty-six as he'd been when we met." (Never mind that Jong is fifteen years his senior.) "Meat from a Truck" is what I would call this chapter if Dart were still worth writing a novel about." But, she scoffs, "the meat is no longer fresh."

Who is this heartless woman? Could it really be the late twentieth century's great defender of erotic love? The woman who claimed, in *Fear of Fifty*, that she still adored each one of her many ex-partners, that in fact "I even love them better than I did when we were together, because now I have more empathy"? *Empathy*? The only emotion visible in the hodgepodge of Jong's latest "memoir" is narcissism. All her politics have dwindled to vanity—and a vague sense of aggrievement. Perhaps she feels the human race hasn't accorded her the adulation she deserves, but where once she was the Feminist Who Loved Men she now comes off as the Slut Who Hates Them. Where once she made some display of solidarity with other women, it is now plain that she dislikes, disregards, and fears them.

Take her attack on female writers her age, or younger. They envy her "rich life," she tells us glibly, the whole lot of them. She has to kick herself under the table to pay attention to them at dinner parties. That said, she has some advice for them: Be loyal to your sex! Don't review another woman's books badly—to do so is a sign of "self-hatred"! Putting aside the gross anti-intellectualism and horde mentality implicit in such a proposition, it is jarring for its hypocrisy. Stand by your sisters, says the career vamp of American letters? (Not content merely to detail, in *Seducing the Demon*, how she destroyed Martha Stewart's marriage, Jong also assaults us with all the withering things Stewart's husband allegedly said about Martha in flagrante delicto.) Don't hurt other women, says the writer



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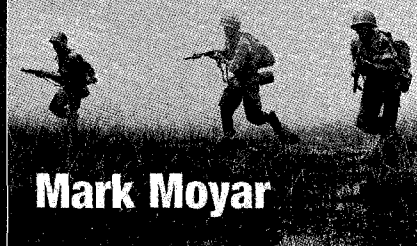
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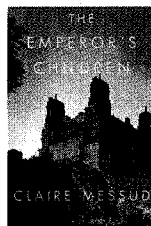
BY ELIZABETH JUDD

Kingsley Amis and David Lodge hilariously skewered academic strivers, while Saul Bellow—in *Herzog* and *Humboldt's Gift*—fashioned something almost Shakespearean from their anguished tirades. Straddling these extremes, Claire Messud turns the grappling for ideological supremacy among two generations of intellectuals into a riveting comedy of manners. Thirty-year-old Marina, the brainy, ravishing only child of a celebrated journalist, returns to her Upper West Side home to complete a possibly worthless book on the cultural implications of children's fashion. There she falls for an iconoclastic editor who dismisses her beloved father as "a tiny, pointless man roaring behind a curtain."

To the eternal themes of love, ambition, and shifting alliances, Messud applies a twentieth-century psychoanalytic gloss: Marina is "her father's Anna Freud," and the anxiety of influence hovers menacingly over all that transpires. Fortunately, Messud's insights are nuanced enough that her flawed luminaries survive as more than mere types. Even minor characters like Marina's mother, an elegant social worker who has a "posh singsong" voice and is discomfiting in her "very niceness," make their mark. Gradually, Messud—wife of the literary critic James Wood—converts academic hairsplitting into a matter of larger consequence, extracting considerable suspense from the young cultural pretenders' attempts to topple the old guard and wrest an erotic prize.

The brinkmanship makes for an excellent read, but some of the pretentious declarations grow tiresome. ("You shun my efforts at gallantry? How shaming.") And Messud misguidedly concludes with the obligatory 9/11 denouement, which compels her Manhattanites to shelve their vainglorious projects and engage in collective hand-wringing. But at least she maintains the thread of her earlier themes in the last, uneven chapters, finessing a cheeky exposé of the pundit class in all its privileged splendor.

Elizabeth Judd is a writer in Washington, D.C.



THE
EMPEROR'S
CHILDREN

by Claire Messud
Alfred A. Knopf

who vociferously spurns her mother, reviles her sisters, and lingers sadistically on how the "schoolteacher" wife of a "famous" Irish poet she "fuck[ed]" and discarded in a fancy London hotel sits home and "pays [his] bills"? *This* person draws the line at a *bad book review*?

Love (like all great undertakings) is a messy matter. It is not my contention that it can—or even should—be innocuous. When Jong was poised to be its feminist champion, in the 1970s, she brought to the discussion both stinging candor and fiery commitment. Today, her sole commitment is to her own fame. Her sole candor is strategic titilla-

"I didn't," smarts Mother Teresa, "give him a *facsimile blow job*!"

Jong's only real love is for the glory she imagines will greet her writing—writing that is notable, unfortunately, for its comic clumsiness: "I wish I could lower my standards," she complains. "I could write faster, but the books would suck." The books *do* suck. Each of them, these days, is about one thing: finishing it. "[G]o home and finish the book," she has her mother say at the close of *Fear of Fifty*. "The story is not over yet," she reminds us at the end of *Seducing the Demon*. Jong's prose, increasingly, is about prose. Even her pornographic fantasies—about

Jong's lies are legion. Incapable of self-criticism, she proves almost touchingly unfit to analyze her own motives. No matter what she does, she is always right and forever wronged.

tion. When she calculates that it will keep us turning the page, she offers sordid details from her (ever more distant) sexual past. In so doing she avoids the far more difficult, and potentially interesting, question of how she lives *now*. Jong has been married, at this point, for roughly fifteen years. She has always said that marriage and erotic intensity—even emotional intensity—are incompatible. Well, *are* they? She chokes off the question with a line or two about tantric sex. She prefers to elaborate on the blow job she gave her publisher in the early '70s.

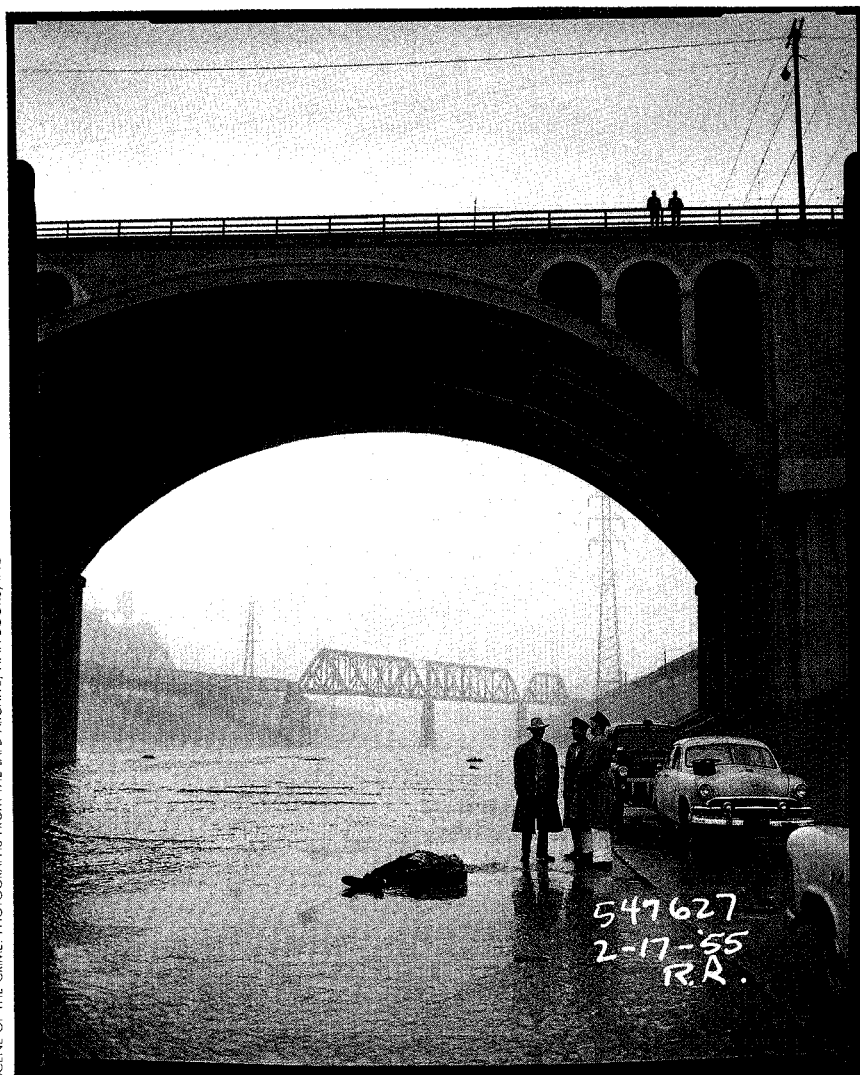
And even in an account of this ilk, her lies are legion. Incapable of self-criticism, Jong proves almost touchingly unfit to analyze her own motives. No matter what she does, she is always right and forever wronged. So even as she—an unpublished novelist at the time, demanding half a million dollars for a novel her elderly publisher knows nothing about—takes his "flabby prick" into her mouth, she is not, she emphatically tells us, a "gold-digger girl." She is a ... "social worker"! She simply "felt sorry for his age." Her only regret? That the old moneybag did not give her a priceless first edition of poetry into the bargain; he gave her only a facsimile.

Bill Clinton, the poet Ted Hughes, and, indeed, William Shakespeare—pale next to her reveries about the literary laurels that await her. "I dream," she tells us in *Seducing the Demon*, "that I have written an amazing book."

Dream on, Erica. This book—like your last dozen—is amazing only for its mediocrity. It is amazing only for its mean-spiritedness, its tedium, its awkward prose, and its stunning self-absorption. Literature can bear a great deal of self-absorption, but Jong may well have overshot the mark. Literary aspiration, at the end of the day, is a limited plot device. Especially in the absence of literary talent. Muses—like men—tend to eschew those who chase them exclusively; single-minded pursuit frightens as often as it flatters them.

The best way to write is to have something to say. For all her aggressive loquacity, Erica Jong has run out of topics. She has run out of interests. She has run out of empathy for other people. And yet the war in which she once fought—the war to reconcile passion with feminism—goes on. The ends are still just. And the stakes are as high as ever. ▀

Cristina Nehring, a regular contributor to *The Atlantic*, is writing a book about women and love, for HarperCollins.



ROUNDUP

Dark Passage

A selective investigation of recent mysteries and thrillers

BY JON ZOBNICA

The word *sleazy* shows up several times in Andrew Klavan's *Damnation Street* (Harcourt), and it certainly has the right address. In this third installment of his Weiss and Bishop series, a prostitute is on the run from both the woebegone obsessive who would be her savior and the artful degenerate bent on loving her quickly to death. The hunt winds through motor hotels on the edge of town, a desert bordello, Reno, and other unwholesome stopping points, and through a family history of drug addiction, blackmail, and parricide. Klavan's confidently wry style keeps things punched up throughout,

not least in his fight sequences, which are deliberately as ludicrous as they are violent (here with martial-arts noises):

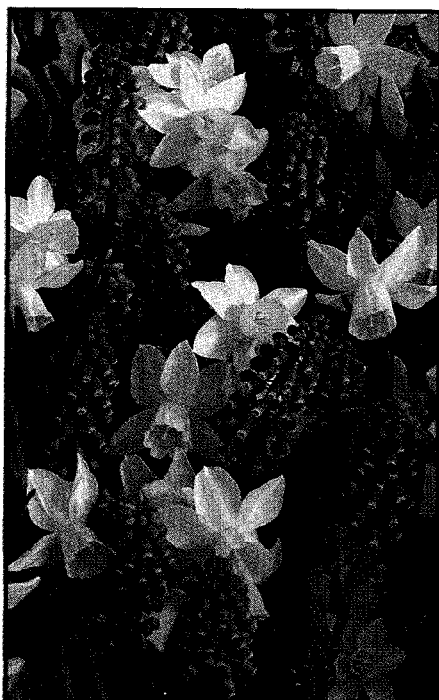
There was the Fu Manchu guy rushing at him, going *hwa hwoo hwee* and so on—and also wielding that goddamned Chinese broadsword Bishop had noticed on the wall ... Gripping the broadsword's handle in one hand, he made the wide, curved silver blade spin and twirl through blurring crisscrosses and figure eights. "*Hwa! Hwoo! Hwee!*" he remarked again. And all the while, the black-and-red scarf flying from the sword's pommel flapped and spiraled, adding to Bishop's distraction.

If having this much fun with a tale of assassination and romantic melancholy is wrong, who wants to be right?

It takes a whole different kind of confidence to write a somewhat decorous whodunit like Robert Goddard's *Hand in Glove* (reissued by Delta). Goddard sets in motion a transcontinental free-for-all over the legacy of a dreamy dead poet, and barely halfway through the who gets done in, leaving readers to 200 pages of subplot. But what subplot: rising like a menacing crescendo above the noisy, crowded orchestra pit of the narrative's first half, it reveals the discord and treacheries therein to be mere noodling. The scope and seriousness of the situation dawn slowly, on both the characters and the reader, making everyone's belated awareness all the more gripping. On a sentence level, Goddard's writing is determinedly unshowy, but any author who can manage so complex an array of characters (themselves admirably complex), who builds suspense around a hidden map to buried treasure, and who casts moustache-twirling Spanish fascists in the role of über-baddies, knows how to have a good time.

As for baddies, this one's new to me: a pitiful old woman with a colostomy bag. And yet Karin Fossum's latest, *When the Devil Holds the Candle* (Harcourt), finds such a character practicing passive evil—in what is basically a heartsickening tale of mothers and sons. Combining the deadly ennui of Camus's *Stranger* with elements of Stephen King's *Misery* and Hitchcock's *Psycho*, this is an engagingly repulsive book. Never mind that Inspector Sejer, the ostensible star, spends most of his time fretting about his new girlfriend's taste for hashish.

Then again, this is just the sort of narrative loose end that might have been welcome in Mary Higgins Clark's *Two Little Girls in Blue* (Simon & Schuster). Awesomely proficient after twenty-five suspense novels, Clark has crafted a tight thriller around the abduction and botched ransoming of twin girls from Connecticut, and her use of coincidence, near misses, investigative breaks, and criminal double crossing is nothing short of masterly—so much



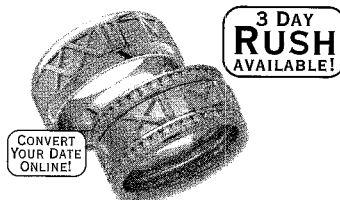
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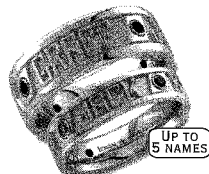
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so that it feels a bit too schematic, as technically precise as the workings of a clock. True, Clark throws off little shavings of useless biographical information—we are told of one character, who appears in no more than a single paragraph, that she's a third-year college student, and of another that he quit smoking at nineteen. But these naturalistic touches (and there are many) go only so far toward distracting attention from the gears and sprockets driving the plot toward its chiming conclusion—in which even those suspects who actually had nothing to do with the crime are reassuringly found guilty of other crimes, for which they pay. Although it's nice when suspicions are confirmed and justice is served, there's ultimately something unthrilling about closure so neat and clean.

George Pelecanos spares us such neatness in *The Night Gardener* (Little, Brown), wherein an investigation into the murder of a black youth grinds through numerous shifts. Though set in Washington, D.C., Pelecanos's mysteries are decidedly unpolitical. (Bureaucrats and politicians play a far larger role—which is to say *any*—in L.A. crime classics like *Chinatown* and *Devil in a Blue Dress* than they do in Pelecanos's hardboiled take on the nation's capital.) Building his story around an uneasy alliance of three cops—one still on the force, one an aged and obsessed retiree, and one an embittered dead-end driven from the ranks some years before by an IAD investigation—Pelecanos manages to avoid the cheap conventions of the buddy formula, and to evoke Chandler himself, without being at all retro or self-conscious about it. A host of supporting characters—family members, barflies, prostitutes, precinct mates, thugs big-time and small—help flesh out this deeply human tale, which doesn't shy from the unexpected discoveries and laudably unsatisfying resolutions of all great noir.

Talk about unexpected discoveries, the Cuban novelist Leonardo Padura's *Havana Black* (Bitter Lemon Press), part of a tetralogy coming out in English in apparently random order, is a revelation. Trafficking in political incorrectness of the euphemistic and not-so-

euphemistic sort, Padura is unabashedly sensual about everything from food, women, death, and weather to ideological disillusionment. He wastes no time with the literary peekaboo of magical realism, nor with the aesthetic excess of more-overt political metaphor—two modes sometimes favored by those writing in or about precarious social climates. (The former requires a coyness Padura seems congenitally deficient in, and the latter a dogmatic earnestness he's probably had his fill of.) Which is to say that this is simply a lush, frank, captivating murder mystery set against the backdrop of an approaching hurricane and the crumbling dreams of an entire generation of Cubans, at home and in exile. With a nod to *Key Largo* and a virtual bow to *The Maltese Falcon*, this novel is ultimately about the redemptive nature of undying friendship and the potentially destructive nature of undying love. Perhaps most bracing is the open struggle its hero wages against his own well-earned cynicism.

It's the sort of struggle that the characters in John Gregory Dunne's re-released *True Confessions* (Thunder's Mouth Press) have abandoned entirely, if they ever waged it in the first place. Those who know this work only through its 1981 film adaptation—starring Robert Duvall and Robert De Niro, and bizarrely unavailable on DVD—may dimly recall lots of coded dialogue and shady dealings between the Catholic archdiocese and the L.A. business community, and that it all somehow overlapped with a fictionalized Black Dahlia murder. In fact, that crime is a MacGuffin, setting off the slow unraveling of a web of venality in which two Irish Catholic brothers—Tom, a petulant, compromised policeman, and Des, a slick, upstart monsignor—find themselves inextricably and not unwittingly tangled. Tom's murder investigation, undertaken with blasé resentfulness, becomes, by the end, "the trail of an intention gone haywire" (to borrow a phrase from Joan Didion, who helped write the screenplay).

The stench of careerism—both rewarded and punished—exudes from every corner of this novel, which is populated by those who "deplored the

appearance of opportunism, although not opportunism itself." It's an achievement of Robert Towne's proportion that so bleak and beautiful a drama could—essentially—hinge on the selection of a new chairman for the archdiocese's building fund. And it's almost madly heroic that Dunne and Didion would attempt a screenplay from a novel in which key characters' dialogue "was ritual, a search for meanings among the monosyllables. Like smoke blown into the wind, it left no traces if the interpretation was wrong." The book is a masterpiece. That the movie is even good (which it is) says as much as anything about this labor of love.

For a visual foray into the morally smoggy mid-century L.A. depicted in *True Confessions*, there's *Scene of the Crime: Photographs From the LAPD Archive* (Harry N. Abrams; released in 2004 but still available), with an introduction by *Black Dahlia* author James Ellroy. This is an inescapably gruesome book, showing Jackson Pollock-style blood splatters leading away from an emptied rocking chair; a stained meat cleaver sitting on a counter next to a windup race car and a little toy speedboat, below which lies the adult victim, hair matted, facedown in a puddle. Many of the scenes involve crimes of passion, and it's partly the quotidian settings that make these photos so disturbing. In boardinghouse rooms and dingy bungalows, one finds pinups and Hollywood publicity shots adorning the walls, a game of solitaire laid out on a kitchen table, and here or there a slumped and bloodied victim, with maybe a look of mute confusion still on the face, or a leg stuck in an immodest position.

Every bit as grisly but less disturbing are the book's numerous mob hits. There's something crudely charming about a couple of heavies like "the two Tonys," sitting in their Oldsmobile, smartly attired with neckties and pocket kerchiefs, one arm draped casually over the seat back, another out the open driver's-side window. But for the dark streaks running down their faces, you might think they were tossing their heads back in a last laugh. Which maybe they were. ■

Jon Zobenica is a senior editor of *The Atlantic*.

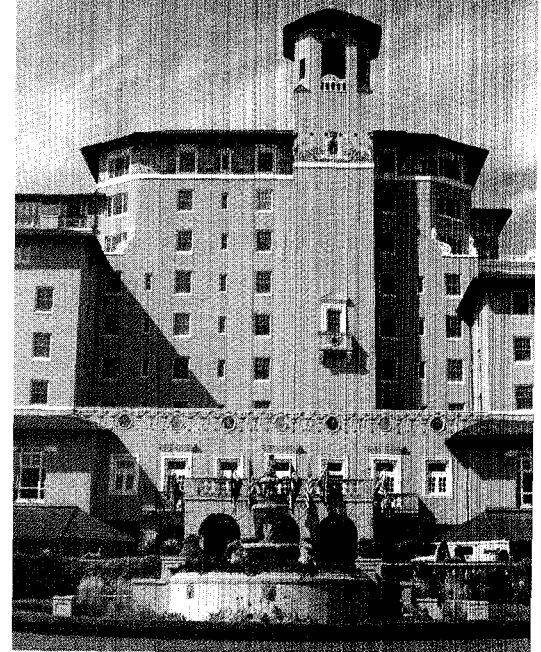
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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Fiasco

by Thomas E. Ricks (Penguin Press)
A Pulitzer Prize-winning military correspondent for *The Washington Post* presents an unpolemical yet blistering account of the planning for and execution of the war in Iraq.

Inside Terrorism

by Bruce Hoffman (Columbia)
A revised and expanded edition of the RAND scholar's classic work on the evolution and present-day expressions of terrorism, featuring added material on the post-9/11 world. Hoffman predicts that by its very definition, terrorism—political violence carried out with the aim of spreading fear and attracting global notice—has a long future in the fractious, media-saturated twenty-first century.

Enough

by Juan Williams (Crown)
In a book that often reads like a padded reprise of Bill Cosby's famed *cri de coeur* at a 2004 NAACP gala, the NPR correspondent raises the alarm about crime, misogyny, and poverty among African Americans. Despite its uninspired execution, *Enough* conveys genuine outrage and despair.

Watching the World Change

by David Friend (FSG)
A *Vanity Fair* editor reflects on visual representations of the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11. Focusing on the week after the attacks, and writing with the distance offered by the lens, Friend creates a cool, critical space for the consideration of tragedy.

Building Red America

by Thomas B. Edsall (Basic)
A longtime *Washington Post* reporter assesses the distinctive qualities of the current GOP ascendancy. The recent trend toward realignment is unique, he argues, in that it has arisen more as a result of deliberate strategy than through organic historical contingency.

U.S. HISTORY



Blessed Among Nations

by Eric Rauchway (Hill and Wang)
America's rise to preeminence, the author argues, was the product of a perfect storm of foreign investment, luck, and global instability, and we forget at our peril the fickle nature of such forces. With hegemony comes responsibility, he suggests, responsibility that the U.S. may presently be all too willing to shirk.

There Goes My Everything

by Jason Sokol (Knopf)
A young historian provides a fascinating and remarkably empathetic assessment of how white southerners experienced the civil-rights movement. Sokol's book offers more evidence (as if more were needed) supporting I. F. Stone's contention that history is tragedy and not melodrama.

WORLD HISTORY



Democracy in Iran

by Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr (Oxford)
A book tracing the tradition of democracy in Iran, from the country's first constitution, in 1906, to the electoral system that survives in spite of the mullahs today. Although the current regime may seem to be growing ever more illiberal, the authors argue, the continued strengthening of Iranian civil society could portend a more democratic future.

The Lost

by Daniel Mendelsohn (HarperCollins)
A *New York Review of Books* critic recounts his search across three continents for people with knowledge of his relatives who perished in the Holocaust.

Easter 1916

by Charles Townshend (Ivan R. Dee)
This gripping new volume presents a dispassionate and definitive reconstruction of the Easter Rising, painstakingly sifting legend from fact, with the help of, among hundreds of other sources, eyewitness accounts recently released by the Irish government.

The Conquest of Nature

by David Blackbourn (Norton)

A natural history of Germany from the mid-eighteenth century to the present, revealing the extent to which landscape is destiny (but not necessarily in the way the Nazis insisted it was).

BIOGRAPHY



Fortunate Son

by Charles Ponce de Leon (Hill and Wang)

A brief new life of Elvis Presley emphasizes his conservative political values and inability to adjust to changing times (the King's surface chameleon tendencies notwithstanding).

Madame Chiang Kai-Shek

by Laura Tyson Li (Atlantic Monthly)

The first biography of the Wellesley-educated charmer portrays her as a tragically complex Scarlett O'Hara figure, at once outspoken and submissive, devoutly religious and coldly calculating, triumphantly Chinese and alien to her compatriots.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE



The Perfect \$100,000 House

by Karrie Jacobs (Viking)

The founding editor of *Dwell* magazine embarks on an epic and moderately successful cross-country search for a reasonably priced home. Although Jacobs's journey is a cheerful one, it also reveals the inescapably darker truth that affordable comfort is remarkably hard to come by in the candy store of American consumption.

Service and Style

by Jan Whitaker (St. Martin's)

A cultural history of (and wistful elegy for) the American department store and the sunnily paternalistic function it served in teaching the middle class how to recognize and outfit itself.

Natural Selection

by Gary Giddins (Oxford)

A wide-ranging collection of essays on music, film, and books from the celebrated *Village Voice* jazz critic (and Bing Crosby biographer).

Bitchfest

edited by Lisa Jervis and Andi Zeisler (FSG)
A tenth-anniversary greatest-hits

anthology from the pages of *Bitch*, the leading post-postfeminist culture-crit zine. Topics under discussion include television, sexuality, parenting, and the conversational utility of the word *like*.

The Essential Chaplin

edited by Richard Schickel (Ivan R. Dee)
Introducing this new anthology, Schickel makes the case for the "kinetic genius" of the Little Tramp, recognizing Chaplin as the performer who made cinema intellectually respectable (even if his own efforts at high-mindedness often fell flat). Winston Churchill, Graham Greene, Theodor Adorno, and others offer their assessments as well.

RELIGION

The New Faces of Christianity

by Philip Jenkins (Oxford)

A leading religious scholar examines Christianity as it is experienced in the global South. Fundamentalist as many of these believers' biblical interpretations may be, Jenkins observes, they also contain a liberating ecstasy absent from the faith as practiced in the North.

A History of the End of the World

by Jonathan Kirsch
(HarperSanFrancisco)

A close reading of the book of Revelation, from its authorship to its various afterlives. Ultimately it's hard to say which perpetual belief is more surprising: that the end is imminent or that salvation is just around the corner.

SPORTS

Baseball

by George Vecsey (Modern Library)

A brief, conversational history by a veteran *New York Times* sportswriter. Although the aromas of Cracker Jack and cut grass hang heavy over the proceedings, Vecsey stops just short of intolerable sentimentality and convincingly portrays the game's reliable monotony as a source of constancy and national comfort.

NOVELS and SHORT STORIES

The Return of the Player

by Michael Tolkin (Grove)

The continuing adventures of Griffin Mill, murderous protagonist of *The Player*, here concerned mainly with midlife

career change, private-school admissions, and an exhausting love triangle. The book also features a winning cameo by one William Jefferson Clinton.

The Last Town on Earth

by Thomas Mullen (Random House)

In 1918, a small Washington logging town quarantines itself against the influenza outbreak raging outside. (Yes, one of the epigraphs is from *The Plague*.) Haunted by a distant war and an acute fear of outsiders, the plot is clearly meant to echo the present.

Rise and Shine

by Anna Quindlen (Random House)

Two sisters—one an unassuming social worker, the other a high-powered morning-show anchor—have their daily routines upended after the latter accidentally works blue on the air.

The Bedroom Secrets of the Master Chefs

by Irvine Welsh (Norton)

The new novel from the man behind *Trainspotting* finds a debased Edinburgh restaurant inspector searching for his long-lost father and engaged in mortal combat with a workplace rival.

The Slow Moon

by Elizabeth Cox (Random House)

A small Tennessee town is racked with suspicion and intrigue after the vicious beating of a teenage girl. Secrets, it is revealed, have a way of disclosing themselves against the will of their keepers.

Coronado

by Dennis Lehane (William Morrow)

A new collection of stories from the author of *Mystic River*.

MYSTERY and SUSPENSE

The Afghan

by Frederick Forsyth (Putnam)

A British special-forces operative tries to infiltrate al-Qaeda in order to avert a terrorist attack of 9/11-like scale.

The Interpretation of Murder

by Jed Rubenfeld (Holt)

Sigmund Freud tours New York in 1909 and turns his analytical powers to solving high-society crimes. Although the plot is fictional, the author, a Yale law professor, drew extensively on Freud's letters and published works in writing his dialogue.

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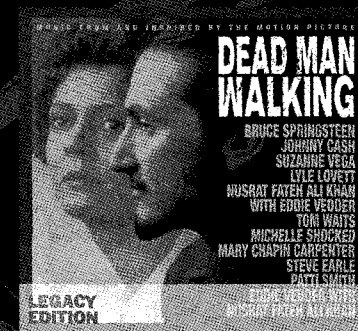
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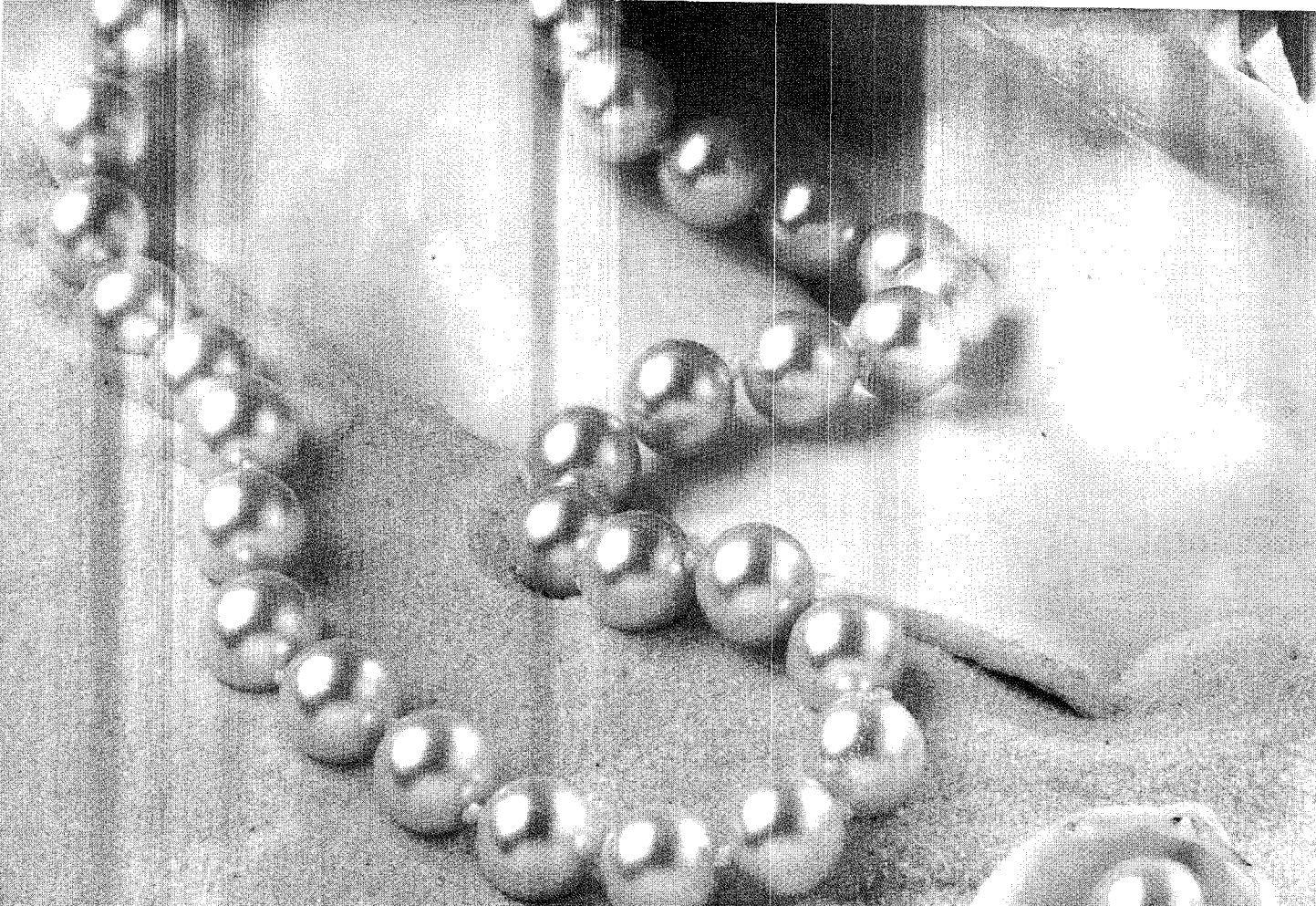
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A trip to Broome. We took the long trip to Australia to study the famous white lipped oysters that produced magnificent pearls that are often 11-14mm—about 8 times the size of a standard cultured pearl. Not only did these oysters produce the rare South Sea pearl but they also produced tremendous amounts of mother of pearl or nacre. Nacre is the lustrous iridescent substance which is secreted by the oyster to form the shiny inside of their shells. When nacre secretions are deposited around the seed they build up to form a full sized pearl. Our bioscientists went to work to see if we could help Mother

Nature along a little. By extracting the seed pearl from young fresh oyster shells and speeding up the natural process by which the nacre coats the pearl, we are able to produce the breathtaking Australian Pacific Pearl.

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TRAVELS

The Road From Ravenna

In the footsteps of the last Roman emperor

BY CULLEN MURPHY

Ravenna grew out of the Adriatic marshes, as Venice one day would, built on pilings and tufts of land. It eventually became a major port, and a base for the Roman Empire's fleet. Julius Caesar gathered his forces at Ravenna as he prepared to cross the Rubicon. Because the city—surrounded by swamps—was so easy to defend, the capital of the Western Empire was moved there from Rome by the emperor Honorius early in the fifth century.

Ravenna was thus the scene of the Roman Empire's final act, or at least its final act in the West. The man regarded as the last in the long imperial line, Romulus Augustus, spent the few months of his reign, in A.D. 475–476, in Ravenna. He was, in fact, not a man but a boy of thirteen or fourteen. Because he was so young, people gave the name Augustus a diminutive twist—*Augustulus*, the emperor was called: “little Augustus.” And because

he was a usurper, installed by his father, a general named Orestes, people gave the name Romulus a pejorative cast—*Momyllus*, they said: “little disgrace.” There was time enough in his reign to mint money—barely—but his name was so long it was hard to fit it onto coins. (Zeno, the emperor of the East at the time, did not have this problem.) But then Orestes fell afoul of barbarian mercenaries in his army and was killed. Romulus lost his throne, and a barbarian named Odoacer made himself king of Italy.

I had long been intrigued by Romulus Augustulus, in part because very little is known about him. The best source I've come across is a monograph titled “The Last Emperor,” by Geoffrey Nathan, published in the journal *Classica et Mediaevalia* in 1992. It seems fitting,

THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

Highlights of a "Fall of Rome Tour"

Two days is enough to see **Ravenna**, whose historic center is compact and well suited to walking. Time a longer visit to coincide with the **Ravenna Festival**, which for seventeen years has brought music, theater, opera, and dance to this former imperial city. The festival runs for several weeks in June and July and offers concerts and acts in venues that are as mesmerizing as the groups the festival attracts. Past performances have included Oscar Wilde's *Salome* and an appearance by the Martha Graham Dance Company.

Ravenna Festival

Via Dante Alighieri, 1
48100 Ravenna, Italy
011-39-054-424-9211
www.ravennafestival.org/festival.php

The idea for the **Appian Way Archaeological Park (Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica)** originated in the late 1800s, when development began encroaching on the remains of the Via Appia. In 1988, after decades of pressure from conservationists, the park opened as an archeological and wildlife preserve. Be sure to visit the San Sebastiano catacombs, which once held the remains of the apostles Peter and Paul, and the imposing circular mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, the daughter-in-law of one of Caesar's triumvirate.

Appian Way

Archaeological Park

Via Appia Antica, 42
00179 Rome, Italy
011-39-06-512-6314
www.parcoappiaantica.org

Visit the **Aurelian Wall Museum (Museo delle Mura)** to learn more about the history of the Aurelian Wall, built to keep the barbarians out of Rome. The museum makes a good starting point for a walk along one of the longest contiguous sections of this ancient structure. It is temporarily closed for renovations, so be sure to call in advance.

Aurelian Wall Museum

Via di Porta San Sebastiano
Rome, Italy
011-39-067-047-5284

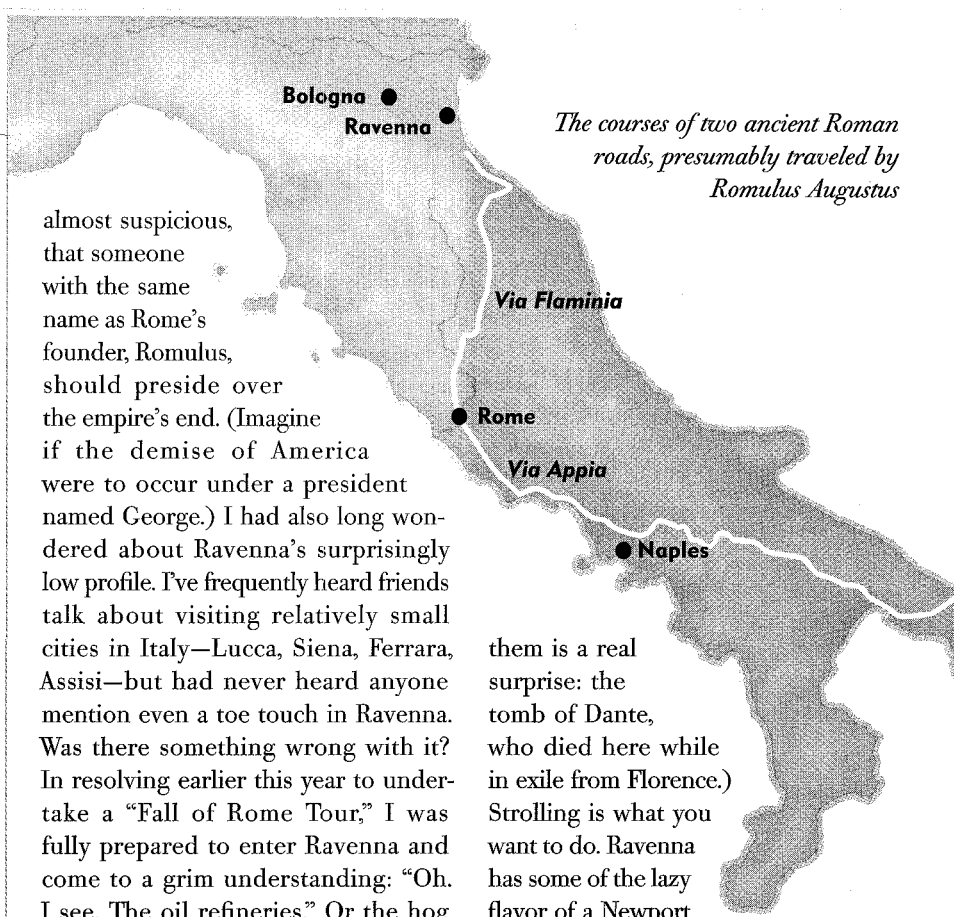
almost suspicious, that someone with the same name as Rome's founder, Romulus, should preside over the empire's end. (Imagine if the demise of America were to occur under a president named George.) I had also long wondered about Ravenna's surprisingly low profile. I've frequently heard friends talk about visiting relatively small cities in Italy—Lucca, Siena, Ferrara, Assisi—but had never heard anyone mention even a toe touch in Ravenna. Was there something wrong with it? In resolving earlier this year to undertake a "Fall of Rome Tour," I was fully prepared to enter Ravenna and come to a grim understanding: "Oh. I see. The oil refineries." Or the hog farms. Or the paper mills.

Not to worry! Stepping off the train at Ravenna in June, I was engulfed by the fragrance of honeysuckle, which hung over the entire city, and still seems to linger in my clothes. The ride from Bologna had taken an hour, across flat open country, a Mediterranean East Anglia. The swamps are mostly gone now, the land drained and reclaimed, crisscrossed with channels and weirs. The train had been filled mainly with young people carrying towels and knapsacks. Ravenna's *centro storico* is no longer a port—it's all dry land—but a string of fine beaches lies along what is now the coast, a twenty-minute bus ride away.

That's not what should bring you to Ravenna, though. The real draw is the sixth-century architecture and mosaics. In its prime, when Ravenna was the capital of the Western Empire and then of the Ostrogothic kingdom of Theodoric (who unseated Odoacer), the city straddled Eastern and Western sensibilities. It's part Roman, part Byzantine. Its dozen or so major churches and monuments from this period are wonderfully preserved and situated within easy strolls of one another. (And among

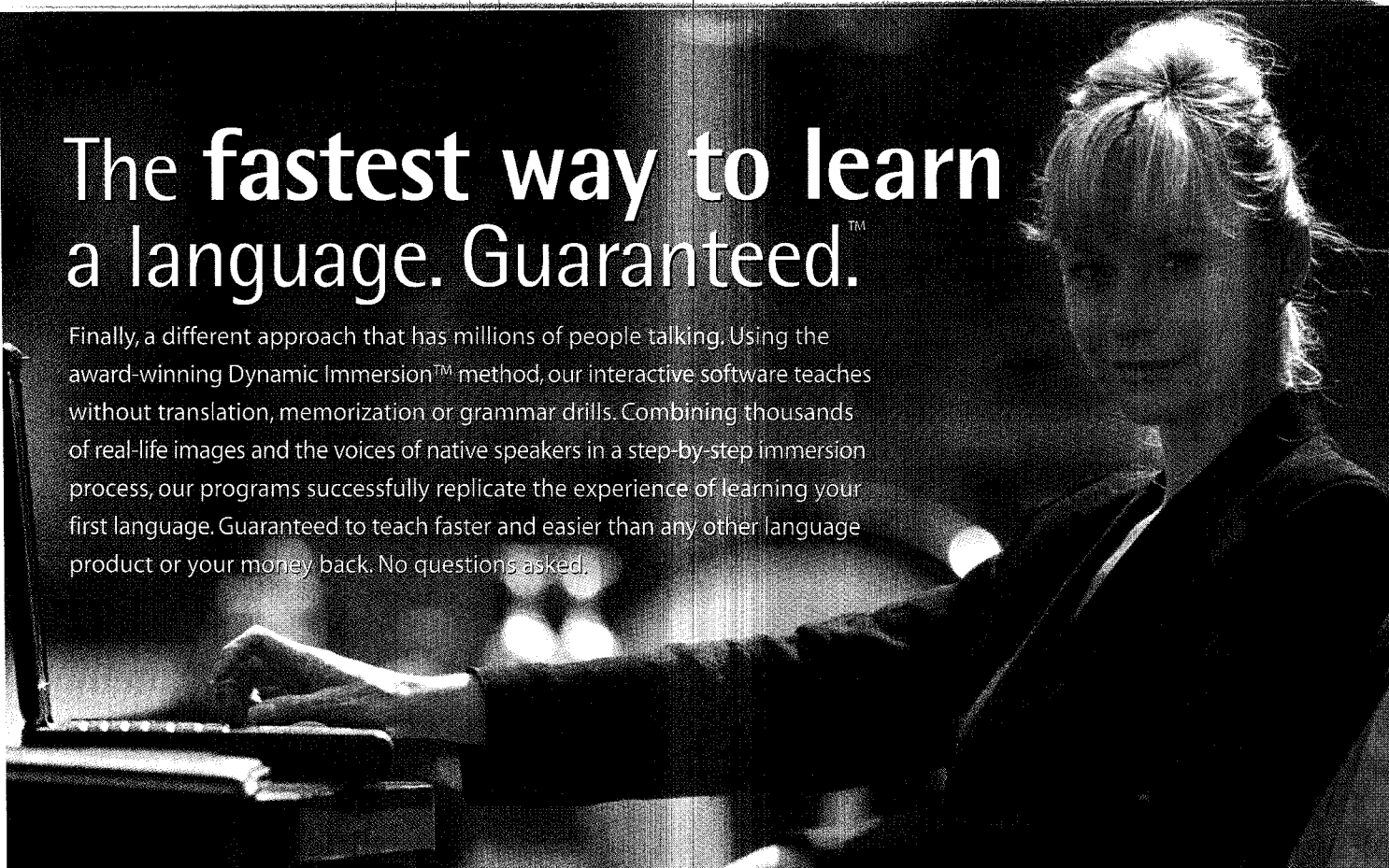
them is a real surprise: the tomb of Dante, who died here while in exile from Florence.) Strolling is what you want to do. Ravenna has some of the lazy flavor of a Newport or an Annapolis, a compact, residential town of pastel homes and fine small hotels and enticing shops, and the elegant public buildings, Roman and Renaissance, are built to human scale. In June the cafés in and around the Piazza del Popolo had set up televisions outdoors to broadcast the World Cup, and no matter where you walked you were always within earshot of phonic fireworks—the cheers and groans of the crowd.

Romulus Augustulus would certainly have known the octagonal Neonian Baptistery at Ravenna, with its extraordinary ceiling mosaic of John the Baptist pouring water over the head of a naked and beardless Jesus; one wonders if the beardless Romulus, himself recently anointed, saw in the image anything ironic about his circumstances. (The sources do not indicate if he was even remotely self-aware.) He would also have known the small, cross-shaped Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Daughter of one emperor, half sister of another, Galla Placidia played the role of the colored cloth in a game of diplomatic and matrimonial Capture the Flag that ranged over two continents and four decades, ending with her death in A.D. 450. The mausoleum is plain brick on



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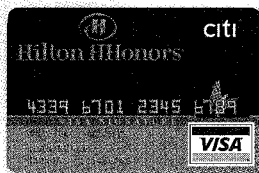
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the outside: nothing prepares you for the mosaics on every surface inside, illuminated by windows of translucent marble. On the same property is the Basilica of San Vitale, built a century later and Ravenna's greatest glory. Mosaics again, but imagine the setting as the interior of a delicate octagonal wedding cake that rises in four pillared layers, narrowing to a brilliant dome.

One of the most charming features of Ravenna is that the English translations on the explanatory text in all the churches and museums seem to come from a single practiced hand, itself a blend of East and West: "The clothing was covered by rich coiffures, closed in silk hairnet with golden threads, and by precious footwear in black leather with baked golden decorations." And: "After Athalaric's death Amalasuntha married her cousin Theodahad, who killed her,

Had Romulus Augustulus been to Rome before? We don't know. Because their capitals lay elsewhere, many of the later emperors spent little or no time in the Eternal City. (Diocletian had been emperor for twenty years before he visited Rome.) The first sight of the city, with its massive wall, would have impressed even a jaded teenager. Rome (like other cities in the empire) was not fully fortified until late in the third century A.D., when the security situation, in the form of barbarian incursions, turned ominous. Starting in 270 the emperor Aurelian encircled Rome with a wall; it is as much as thirteen feet thick and thirty-five feet high, and runs for more than twelve miles. Most of it is still intact.

The Aurelian Wall greeted Alaric the Visigoth when he approached Rome with his forces, in A.D. 408. Breaching it was beyond the barbarians' capabili-

It seems fitting that someone with the same name as Rome's founder, Romulus, presided over the empire's end. (Imagine if America's demise were to occur under a president named George.)

being inspired from the conservative Gothic wing." There are shady nooks in parks all over the city, and the book to have with you is Peter Brown's *World of Late Antiquity*, a work of historical prose in the high style that explains what the Fall of Rome was and wasn't. It certainly wasn't the cataclysm of popular imagination, with fur-clad Teutons putting Rome to the torch. Leadership changed, but for most people in the empire, life in 477 was the same as life in 475.

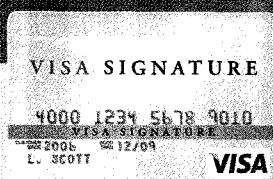
Not for Romulus Augustulus, though. His life was spared, but he was exiled to the far coast, to modern Naples. As far as Professor Nathan can tell, Romulus left Ravenna with his mother, and probably a large retinue. The natural way to go would have been to take the great Via Flaminia—roughly the path of the current Strada Statale 3—south to Rome, and continue from there to Naples on the oldest of Rome's major roads, the Via Appia, which even then had been in place for 700 years.

Cities really were safe behind their walls, though they might have to endure what Alaric had in store—a protracted siege. Partly to see how Rome may have looked to the Visigoths, and partly in the spirit of Sir Edmund Hillary ("Quia est!"), I decided to walk the whole perimeter of the wall. Given the weather (Rome can make you wilt in a day) and the fact that I served as my own Tenzing Norgay, I conducted the assault over the course of three very long mornings. The first took me past the Via Salaria. Alaric finally entered through this gate, in 410, after the Romans had had enough and agreed to let the Visigoths in for a relatively controlled sack, lasting three days. (When the Romans asked what they could keep for themselves, Alaric replied: "Your lives.") Rome was sacked once more, in 455, now by the Vandals, and again it opened itself up for controlled pillage, this time for two weeks. A vulnerable feature were the eleven aqueducts leading into the city, hard to miss on their high arches and easily

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cut. But one of the eleven, the Aqua Virgo, was almost entirely underground, and flows to this day. Its terminus is the Trevi Fountain; you can see (and hear) part of the ancient aqueduct below the Sala Trevi cinema in an alley nearby.

The last leg—in every sense—of my circumambulation took in the Porta San Sebastiano, where the Via Appia begins its 350-mile journey to the heel of Italy's boot. Parts of the Via Appia Antica are closed to traffic on Sundays, and the stretch running south from the Tomb of Cecilia Metella, lined with crumbling graves and tall umbrella pines, and parallel to an aqueduct, is one of the finer archaeological walks in the world.

One hundred and twenty miles along that journey, on the Bay of Naples, stood the great estates of Lucullus, the general and statesman of the late republican period—estates described by Plutarch and supporting a way of life so

was dining alone, a servant prepared a simple meal and was told by his master to go back and bring forth a sumptuous repast, as if there were guests: "Did you not know that tonight Lucullus is dining with Lucullus?"

In some diminished manner the Lucullan estate must have still been extant in 476, because Romulus Augustulus apparently passed the rest of his days there. The site is occupied now by the medieval fortress Castel dell'Ovo, on a headland, nearly an island, that effectively separates the tourist waterfront of Naples to the north from the gritty seaport to the south. Castel dell'Ovo means "Castle of the Egg" (or, as they call it in Ravenna, "Acropolis of the Female Gamete"). According to legend, the poet Virgil placed a sacred egg in a secret room underneath, and said that if the egg ever broke, Naples would be destroyed. Looking at Naples today, it's hard to say whether the egg is intact.

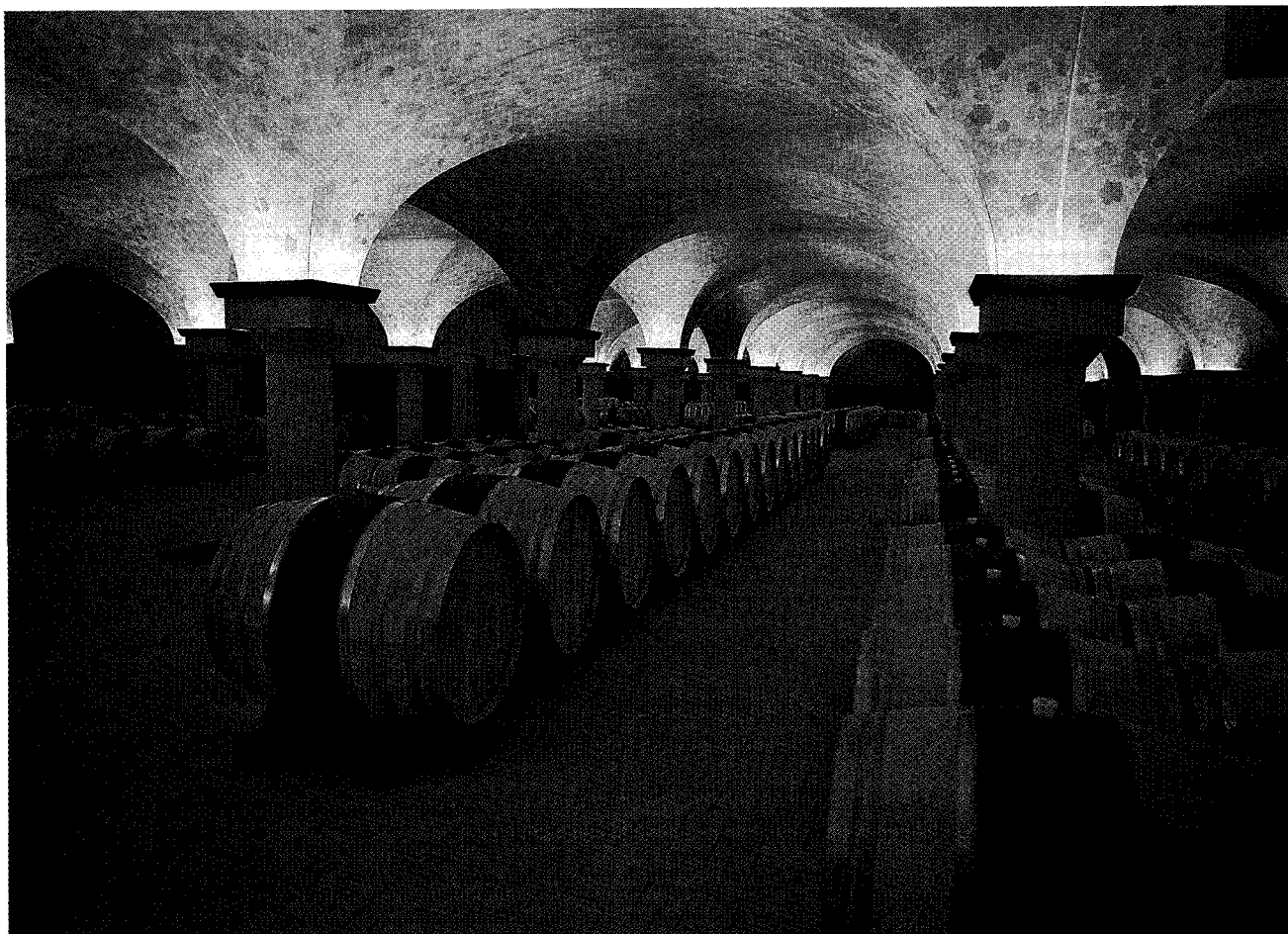
Romulus Augustulus lived for a long time after being dethroned. He didn't have to worry about money: the barbarians who kicked him out gave him a large annual pension.

opulent as to give rise to our own term *lucullan*. Modern Naples is dense, hard-scrabble, chaotic, and unrelaxing, but redeemed by what's around it (Pompeii, Vesuvius, the coastal towns). In imperial days the bay area was a vacation spot for wealthy Romans. The naturalist Pliny the Elder had a villa here, in what is now the beach town of Miseno; it was from Miseno that he sailed to get closer to the eruption of Vesuvius. (Very bad idea.) You can still walk the sprawling remains of the emperors' villa on a hillside at Baiae, nearby; and you'll be virtually alone when you do. (For reading, bring Robert Harris's excellent historical novel *Pompeii*.) But no domains rivaled those of Lucullus. Gardens cascaded luxuriantly down terraces to the shore. Sluice gates brought the renewing sea into teeming fish ponds. Off-shore follies floated on the waves. The quality and plenitude of food and drink were renowned, and served not merely to impress others. Once, when Lucullus

The Lucullan villa at some point gave way to a monastery, enshrining the bones of Saint Severinus; circumstantial evidence suggests that Romulus and his mother may have founded it. If this is the same "Romulus" to whom the Ostrogothic king Theodoric wrote in 510, then Romulus Augustulus lived for a good long while after being removed from his throne. He didn't have to worry about money: in a rare act, the barbarians who kicked him out gave him a large annual pension.

Sitting across from the Castel dell'Ovo in the breeze late one afternoon, eating a *granita al limone*, I wondered what Romulus Augustulus thought about during his thirty-five years on the Bay of Naples. I know what I would have been thinking: I'd sooner lose an empire than Ravenna. ▽

Cullen Murphy is an editor at large of Vanity Fair and was for many years the managing editor of The Atlantic. He is at work on a book titled Are We Rome?, to be published next spring.



FOOD

Wine Therapy

*What makes the wines of San Patrignano so distinctive?
It's not just the grapes*

BY CORBY KUMMER

The views of the inviting green hills around San Patrignano—a village above Rimini, the Adriatic seaside resort made famous by native son Federico Fellini in *Amarcord*—are as splendid as those from any Italian winery. The tiny republic of San Marino, improbably perched at the top of a cone-shaped mountain, rises in the distance, just three miles away. As if the manicured vineyards weren't decorative enough, there is the building where the grapes arrive for sorting and crushing. At other wineries, grapes are crushed in a parking lot that doubles as a loading dock during harvest time. At San Patrignano the crushing area is a pavilion, with majestic open ironwork cathedral-like arches

on all four sides framing the gorgeous views. The adjacent winery is large and impressive, its bright and frescoed cellar containing a glassed-in tasting room that looks like something out of a James Bond movie. But the pavilion is glorious, giving great dignity to the manual labor involved in raising and picking grapes.

Those grapes are Sangiovese, famous in Tuscan Chianti but also native to the town's region of Emilia-Romagna, which is known for its rich cuisine (Bologna is the capital). One of the wines for which San Patrignano has become known, *Avi*, is a pure expression of Sangiovese: it has notes of spice, leather, and tobacco, and a slight smokiness; it is full bodied, making it suitable for drinking with many

kinds of pastas and grilled meat or fish. Montepiolo, the winery's blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc, costs less than many Italian wines of the same quality.

San Patrignano's supervising winemaker, Riccardo Cotarella, is a cult figure; the wines he has worked on are celebrated so often by Robert M. Parker Jr. that wineries in search of a consultant-magician to lift them to international fame vie for his services. Yet Cotarella has never charged San Patrignano for his winemaking skills.

The big difference between San Patrignano and other wines is not the quality or the price, or even the beautiful views. It's something hinted at in the legend that appears on the bottle: WINE IS PLEASURE AND HEALTH. DRINK WITH SOBRIETY. The 1,800 residents of San Patrignano are all recovering drug addicts, who live in what is Italy's largest treatment community for an average of between three and four years. Cotarella considers himself part of the San Patrignano family—a

PASQUALE BOVE

FIVE NOTEWORTHY SANGIOVESES

Percarlo, San Giusto a Rentennano.

The Martini di Cigala family makes what the authority Burton Anderson has called "the most virile pure Sangiovese," made in the hills near Siena.

Castello di Ama, Chianti Classico.

Managing Director Lorenza Sebasti and the winemaker Marco Pallanti have long stood for quality and stubborn individuality; all of their wines are worth trying (and their olive oil is too).

Riecine, Chianti Classico. This British-founded vineyard, originally part of the famous Badia a Coltibuono estate, has for more than thirty years produced exemplary Chiantis, now under the direction of the winemaker and co-owner Sean O'Callaghan.

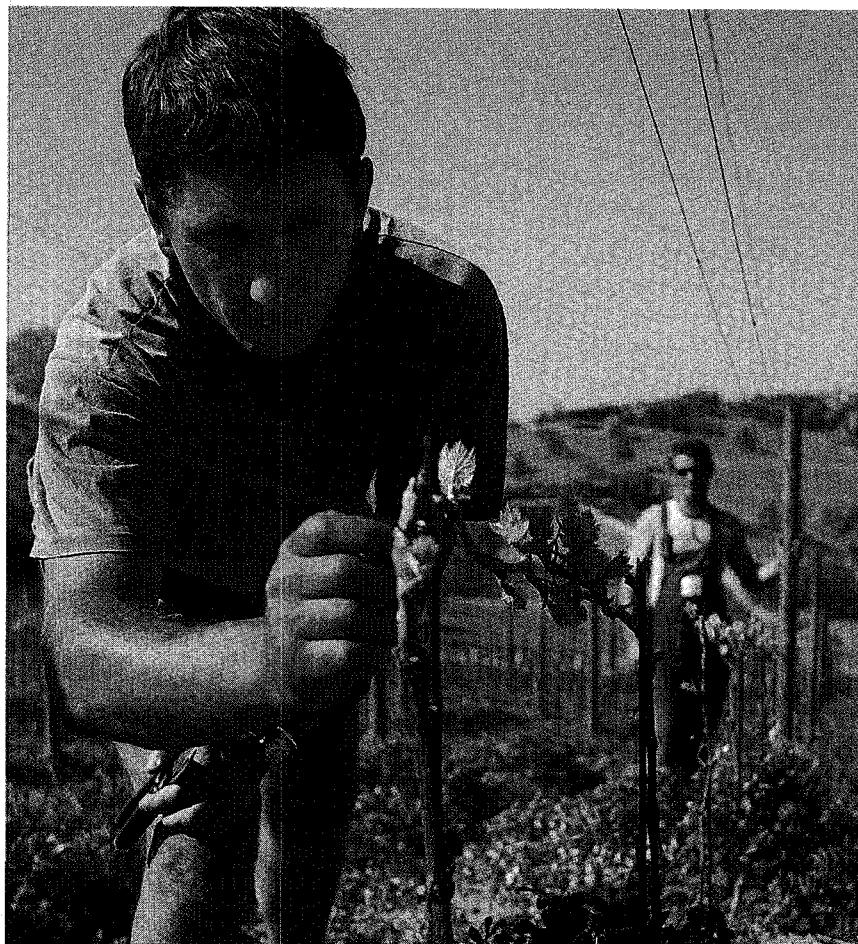
Fattoria Paradiso, Sangiovese di Romagna. The variety of Sangiovese raised at San Patrignano, this one made by well-established and respected winemakers nearby, the Pezzi family of Bertinoro.

Avi, San Patrignano. San Patrignano's big-deal all-Sangiovese wine, a consistent award winner. Its Noi, a blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot, is versatile enough to be a weeknight wine.

family that, after twenty-eight years of existence, includes 14,000 graduates.

Winemaking at San Patrignano is a form of rehabilitative therapy, one of numerous trades taught and practiced at the highest level in a country that could fairly be called the world's artisanal treasury. The pavilion is so grand because during the harvest more than 700 of the residents come together in the joyous shared activity of crushing grapes. And the beauty at every turn—the landscape, the pavilion, the workshops where the ironwork was forged and furniture crafted and upholstery hand-blocked—is part of the therapy too.

San Patrignano is a firmly well-ordered realm. On a recent early-summer evening its head, Andrea Muccioli, took me around the winery (whose pavilion he



designed) and several of the workshops. We began in the store, near the entrance—San Patrignano, known to almost every Italian, is open to the public for tours. The hand-crafted furniture, wallpaper, and fabrics on display are impressive for their workmanship, clean design, and comparatively low prices and are available to designers around the world. (Several of the techniques have all but vanished, even in Italy.) When the community was just starting, in the early 1980s, Renzo Mongiardino, an internationally famous decorator, brought in his valued craftsmen to teach San Patrignano residents forgotten skills, such as stenciling and waxing paper to look like parquet; artisans who fear that their knowledge will die with them continue to donate teaching time. (For information about ordering San Patrignano products go to www.sanpatrignano.org.)

The prices are reasonable because the labor is free—as is drug treatment at San Patrignano. The sale of wine, which is a significant revenue producer, and other goods accounts for about half the

annual budget of 25 million euros; the rest comes from donations. All the residents (the term used at San Patrignano is *ragazzi*, which translates as "kids") learn new trades soon after they begin their stay.

As he showed me around, Muccioli was jocular with the blacksmiths, and in general displayed the big-brother attitude he says he feels toward everyone at San Patrignano. But even as he gave and accepted the hugs and backrubs that nurses and aides at the large health-care clinic pressed on him, his demeanor was somber, watchful, authoritarian. Andrea was fourteen and his younger brother, Giacomo, twelve when they first shared their home with a recovering addict. Their parents, Vincenzo and Antonietta, owned a hotel in Rimini and ran an informal free clinic two nights a week at their weekend farm, practicing alternative medicines such as homeopathy and acupuncture. The couple turned that farm into a residential treatment facility, and over the years they developed vocational training and rules for group

MARTINA CRISTOFANI/ANSA

living that produced noteworthy results. Today San Patrignano claims that more than 70 percent of its graduates remain drug-free for three years after leaving the community.

From the beginning, San Patrignano has been controversial. Vincenzo Muccioli worked outside the state system and made his own rules, many of which were harsher than those of the country's usual drug treatments. He attracted broad support, including from the right; an oil family named Moratti, for instance, is a principal backer. The funding Muccioli attracted helped him to expand the complex on a grand scale (it now covers about 624 acres, four times its original size). He was criticized for living an imperial life in which he was the unchallenged dictator. During the 1980s residents complained of maltreatment and abusive punishment bordering on torture, and San Patrignano was the target of investigations for a series of scandals. The scandals—and especially Muccioli's alliance with right-wing politicians who shared his view that drug laws and punishments should be harsher, along the lines of the American model—made Muccioli a target for criticism.

In 1994, Andrea, after training as a lawyer and traveling extensively, decided to return to live full-time to San Patrignano. In 1995 his father died, at age sixty-one, putting the program's very survival in question. "The idea was that the flag will fall if you don't hold it up," Andrea told me. "I found myself near the flag, and people said, 'Take it.' I did, and had to hope people would follow." Barely thirty, he assumed leadership of the center; with the fund-raising help of Giacomo, who had trained and practiced as a veterinarian before returning to live and work at San Patrignano, Andrea stabilized and expanded the community. The brothers strengthened the community's ties with various social-service agencies and with donors (a group of supporters, Friends of San Patrignano, held its first U.S. fund-raiser, an auction, in New York last year), and the center continues to thrive.

But it still has fervent critics. Andrea advocates harsh drug laws as staunchly as his father did, and has appeared with Silvio Berlusconi in calling for them. He

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THE AMERICAN VERSION

The closest American analogue to San Patrignano is the Delancey Street Foundation, close by the Bay Bridge along San Francisco's Embarcadero. Ever since the two communities discovered each other, like long-lost twins, through an international conference, they have developed links, including an exchange program. Delancey Street is right in the middle of the city, on what is now prime property but wasn't when residents took out contractor licenses and taught themselves construction to build a new home. Like San Patrignano, the complex is very beautiful—400,000 square feet of buildings that look like a fantasy of Italian villas. Its 500 residents, most of them repeat criminals facing long sentences and given this last chance by state courts, stay at least two years.

Mimi Silbert, Delancey Street's charismatic, mouthy, mountain-moving founder, has for thirty-five years won over neighbors, judges, banks, zoning bureaus, and licensing agencies to create what she calls the "Harvard of the underclass," with vocational training and education required for all residents. Numerous affiliated businesses (moving, chauffeuring) pay much of the budget. Silbert told me that, like Muccioli, she must daily turn down more requests to enter the community than she can accept. "How do they know about us? How do the people next door to us know about BMWs and goat cheese? It's word on the street."

Delancey Street may not make wine, but it does operate an airy and lovely café/bookshop and a very popular restaurant. Word has brought many neighbors to the restaurant, which serves comfort food from, as Silbert says, everyone's grandmother. So aside from her own grandmother's matzo ball soup, options include homestyle Greek food and admired burgers and sweet-potato pie. The outdoor dining and the stunning views of the bay help too.

Delancey Street Restaurant
600 Embarcadero (at Brannan)
San Francisco, Calif.
415-512-5179

is opposed to the legalization of marijuana, a sometime pet cause of the left, and has been instrumental in forming a network of 200 rehabilitation centers that oppose any drug legalization.

Vincenzo Muccioli had a passion for dog and horse training, both long-time components of drug rehabilitation. (San Patrignano is best known outside Italy for raising show-jumping horses and holding international competitions.) Andrea Muccioli's passion is wine. It was he who called in Cotarella to try improving a grape that had a distinguished history in the region but had seldom been grown quite so close to the sea. Cotarella had had great success facing similar climatic challenges, and he readily agreed to try making a world-class Sangiovese wine once he saw the landscape.

Even though the Sangiovese grape is a "wild animal," as Muccioli describes it—unpredictable in its first weeks of vinification, when winemakers need to make important decisions about when to stop fermentation and where and how long to store new wine—he wanted to restore it to the region. He also wanted to pay homage to his father by using a native grape: the wine name *Avi* comes from "a Vincenzo," and is also Italian for "ancestors." (The wine's label design is donated every year by a different artist.) Though its first two vintages were not all the men had hoped for, *Avi* has lately been a consistent winner of Italy's prestigious Tre Bicchieri ("Three Glasses") award. Piero Selvaggio, owner of the Valentino restaurants in Santa Monica and Las Vegas, and one of the country's most respected authorities on Italian wine, has long offered several San Patrignano wines on his list. He told me that he finds them "much more elegant and interesting than other Sangioveses."

During my tour I was shown a large, nearly finished restaurant on a hill above the winery, where visitors will be able to eat the food that the residents of San Patrignano produce: the cured meats San Patrignano makes from its own pigs; the *piadina*, griddle-cooked flatbread that is a hallmark of Romagna, and which arrived, freshly made, every ten minutes while I was having dinner with Muccioli

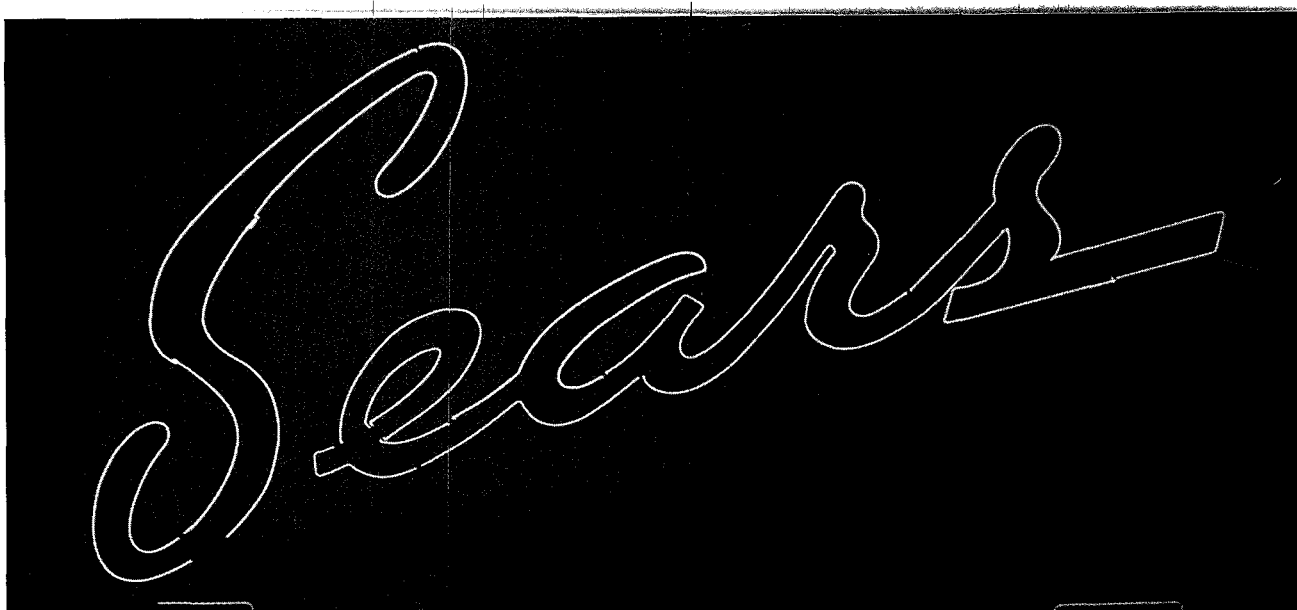
in the enormous refectory; and the cheeses, one of which, *squacquerone*, a fresh cow's-milk cheese in the shape of a high wheel of Camembert but white and squishy, is faint-inducingly good.

During meals at San Patrignano, the discipline is strict. Residents cook and serve one another; the rotating serving staff's gender ratio—70 percent male to 30 percent female—mirrors that of the community. After the group is seated, at long picnic tables, a handclap sounds and everyone rises for a minute of prayer (the community has no religious affiliation, although a priest comes to say Mass on Sundays). At the end of the meal diners stand again at a signal, as if responding to a rifle shot. The discipline and the constant emphasis on groups, Muccioli told me, is aimed at freeing residents from their history of thinking only of themselves and their own needs. Residents do all their work in teams, and they start out living in dorms, where they need to make group decisions about evening activities; after a year, spouses and children may join them in houses San Patrignano has built for families.

Many of the alliances formed at San Patrignano are lifelong. When I visited, on a Friday, the theater and lecture hall were being readied for seven marriages that would take place that weekend, some between current residents but most between graduates, who come back often to visit what was in some cases the first functional family they were part of.

As for the question Americans, but not Italians, immediately ask: Yes, residents may drink a glass of wine with lunch and with dinner (and may smoke up to ten cigarettes a day). Despite his hard stance on drugs like marijuana, Andrea Muccioli says his program is in tune with the ancient Mediterranean culture of enjoying wine as an adjunct to a meal—and besides, alcohol is very seldom the chief problem for any resident. The San Patrignano journey, he says, is toward autonomy and dignity, so that residents "won't be considered fragile and sick the rest of their lives." Responsibly drinking—as well as making—wine is considered an integral part of that journey. ▀

Corby Kummer is a senior editor of The Atlantic.



COMMERCE AND CULTURE

Signs of Our Times

In under a century, neon signs—part sculpture, part lighting, part billboard—have gone from marketing tool to tacky trash to folk art

BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

Like the skyscraper, the automobile, and the motion-picture palace, neon signs once symbolized popular hopes for a new era of technological achievement and commercial abundance. From the 1920s to the 1950s, neon-lit streets pulsed with visual excitement from Vancouver to Miami. Large-scale spectacles—tropical fish up to forty-three feet long hypnotically swimming past the Wrigley Spearman, or acrobatic Little Lulu lighting up each letter of a giant Kleenex box as she tumbled across it—provided free entertainment, while the humblest shop signs turned the urban night into well-lit public space.

Neon's glowing colors and sinuous shapes haven't changed significantly since the 1920s, but the medium's meanings, and its fortunes, have shifted dramatically over the decades. The history of neon signs suggests how thoroughly entangled memory, identity, and hope are with even the purest sensory pleasures—and how truly subjective are the clashing tastes that shape aesthetic regulations.

In their heyday, neon signs "were very much a symbol of modernism," says Adolfo Nodal, the former general manager of the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs

Department. "They became a symbol of the new age, the Jazz Age, the new era that was sweeping the country." Nodal spearheaded a campaign that over the past decade has restored about 130 of the city's historic signs, mostly the long-neglected rooftop markers of apartment buildings and hotels. "They're beautiful objects in their own right," says Nodal, "and lighting them brings back ... a more beautiful time."

Neon inspires passion. It still exists today largely because of the efforts of enthusiasts, mostly older baby boomers with fond memories of roadside America. They nurtured the craft back to life and preserved the "garish" signs that zealous civic beautifiers had tried to wipe out. In the late 1970s, neon "was a little bit like the last buffalo tied up outside the Indian gift store somewhere—almost extinct, certainly thirsty and hungry," recalls the artist Rudi Stern, whom many neon lovers credit with saving the medium. In 1972, Stern founded Let There Be Neon, a gallery and workshop in New York, which trained artists to use neon and promoted it as an artistic medium. "I wanted to turn people on to the beauty of it, to the creative, expressive possibilities of it."

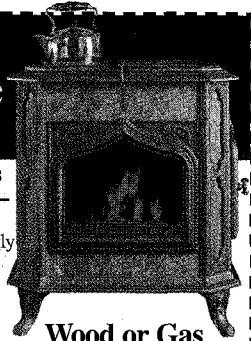
Today, neon signs are treasured by collectors, displayed in museums, and encouraged, even subsidized, by towns hoping to add zip to districts that go dark at 5 p.m. When the automotive specialist RM Auctions held a memorabilia sale this past June, a Thunderbird Motel neon sign fetched \$27,600, one for the Cloud 9 Motel went for \$21,275, and just the star from atop an old Holiday Inn neon sign brought \$3,220. "These things that formerly had no value are now seen as folk art," says Len Davidson, a sign maker and the author of *Vintage Neon*.

In 1983, Davidson gave up an academic career in sociology to pursue his love of neon. He has turned his vintage-sign collection into the Neon Museum of Philadelphia, which displays signs in businesses around the city. Elsewhere, neon has found permanent quarters, notably in the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati, founded in 1999, and Los Angeles's Museum of Neon Art, founded in 1981 to preserve old signs and exhibit fine art that incorporates neon. All this neon appreciation represents a major change in attitudes. Beginning in the 1960s, neon signs were persecuted throughout the United States and Canada—torn down and outlawed by city officials determined to avoid the "carnival atmosphere" and "visual clutter" of such blatant commercialism. "The signs and the billboards are bullying you thousands of times a day," Alderman Warnett Kennedy told the residents of Vancouver, calling on "the more thoughtful citizens" to "become nuisances on the subject of ugliness."

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Soon enough, Vancouver's streets, formerly awash in color, started to go dark. The anti-neon movement reflected both elite taste and consensus ideology. The bright colors and pulsing animation of the signs defied the formal geometry of aristocratic modernism and the tidied-up corporatism of the Galbraithian "New Industrial State."

Dan Holzschuh, a Dallas-area sign maker and collector, remembers a trade-magazine article from the early 1970s documenting the trend with photos of a crane "cleaning up" a downtown street by removing all the neon signs. Then "it shows trailers going to the landfill and dumping, dumping all these neon signs."

By the 1970s, neon was almost dead. The skilled craftsmen who could wire signs and bend glass were retiring without successors. "They were hardly even training anyone anymore," says Tama Starr, an old friend of mine and the president of Artkraft Strauss in New York, the company that for three generations built the neon spectaculars of Times Square. In the 1970s, the main demand for her family's wares came from porn merchants—like the red neon curtains of the Pussycat Theater façade—a relationship that made neon seem even less reputable. The signs also fell victim to the symbolic politics of the energy crisis. With Americans turning down thermostats and sitting in gas lines, big blinking signs seemed wasteful—even though they weren't. Neon signs don't consume much power, but they *look* like they do. A cousin of fluorescent lighting, neon is actually quite energy efficient. A neon tube glows coolly when high-voltage, low-ampere electrical power excites the gas within it. The color depends on which inert gas the tube contains—neon for red, argon for blue—and whether additives like mercury are present. For more variety, the glass itself can be colored or a fluorescent coating added.

The low point for neon came in 1982, when Holiday Inn did away with its signature "Great Sign," replacing the neon extravaganza with a forgettable green plastic box. Of the thousands of Holiday Inn signs that once shone on America's highways, only one remains

to be seen, in the Henry Ford Museum, in Dearborn, Michigan. What good taste and aggressive regulation couldn't squelch, corporate image making did. Out went lighted tubes, and in came bright plastic signs or, a bit later, individual plastic letters discreetly illuminated by internal neon tubes.

Neon had a resurgence in the 1980s. Cities including Vancouver and San Diego reversed their anti-neon ordinances, and the Times Square spectaculars reclaimed their dignity when Japanese electronics companies reimposed the medium from Tokyo. But today neon is threatened by a new technology: low-maintenance, easily programmed light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, which often use even less power than neon and glow more sharply. A year ago, one of the country's most famous neon signs, the pulsing Citgo logo near Boston's Fenway Park, was replaced with an LED copy—not quite as elegant, perhaps, but able to survive a Boston winter without repairs. Advertisers prefer LEDs and video screens, which are visible even in the daytime. Instead of wooing customers with mesmerizing signs of identity and presence, these new media display constantly changing information, from brand announcements to recycled television commercials. With neon, "you were looking at a piece of art, and now you're looking at a manufactured object," says Starr. Most of those artworks are long gone, carted to the dump to be crushed into compact cubes of glass and steel. Storage problems make neon signs the most ephemeral of commercial arts.

Bob Jackowitz, the vice president of Artkraft Strauss, recalls one of his favorite creations—four nine-foot-high vertical sine waves, each a different color, that danced in and out of one another, perfectly synchronized so they never collided. "If it was at MOMA, it would be a piece of sculpture," he says. "If it was in front of an office building, it would be functional art. But it was in a disco, so it was a lighting fixture." When the disco was torn down, Jackowitz was asked if he wanted to reclaim the piece. "I did want it," he says, "but where was I going to put it?"

Artkraft Strauss itself preserved largely what the workers in its factory

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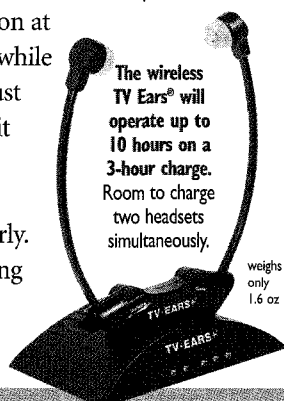
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happened to find amusing and portable enough to hang on the wall. These remnants—mostly individual letters or small pieces from bakeries and handstands—went on the auction block in May of this year after Starr sold Artkraft's sign-construction and -maintenance operation to Clear Channel (which hired the workers but won't be building new neon signs). As bidders were paying \$8,365 for the nearly six-foot-high *i* from the A&E Biography sign that hung high over Columbus Circle from 1998 to 2005, and \$1,793 for a restaurant's neon caricature of Bob Hope, a crew was dismantling the glass-bending room at the Artkraft factory.

Starr believes that neon had a good run but has no future in the sign business. "There's no way neon is going to come back," she says. "It's very high voltage. It's dangerous. It involves gases. You've got mercury. To dispose of it is a big pain in the neck. It's expensive. It's all handmade." Artkraft Strauss's business now consists only of designing signs, making deals, and maintaining a huge archive of photos and other historic materials. Of neon, she says: "I like it a lot, but I just can't see it."

But a medium as beloved as neon doesn't disappear—it becomes an art form, justifying special materials and high prices. "We're up 30 percent for the year, and 90 percent of what we do has neon in it," says Jay Blazek, owner of Western Neon in Seattle. Blazek grew up in the business—his father ran a neon school in Wisconsin—but, unlike the traditional sign maker, he takes a decidedly contemporary, upscale approach. Western Neon not only makes signs but also designs subtle interior lighting, using neon in curved ceiling recesses, for restaurants and other businesses. Two of Blazek's fifteen employees are full-time designers, and the shop includes gallery space. "The only way that I can forge my destiny in this business is by creating really interesting things," says Blazek. "If we just make square boxes and channel letters, other things will come along that are new and improved." ▀

Virginia Postrel is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and the author of The Substance of Style and The Future and Its Enemies. Her blog, the Dynamist, can be found at www.dynamist.com/weblog.

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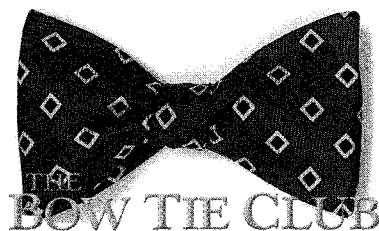


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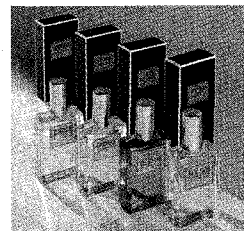


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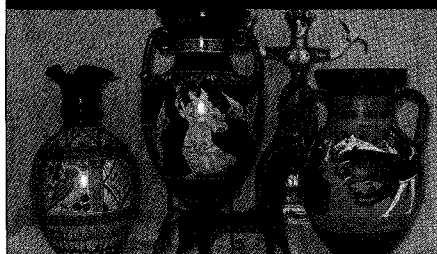
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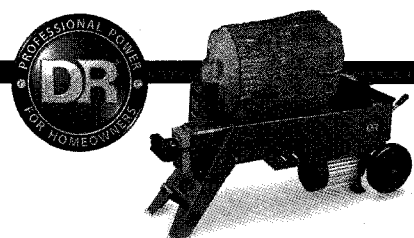


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File Not Found

Why a stone tablet is still better than a hard drive

BY JAMES FALLOWS

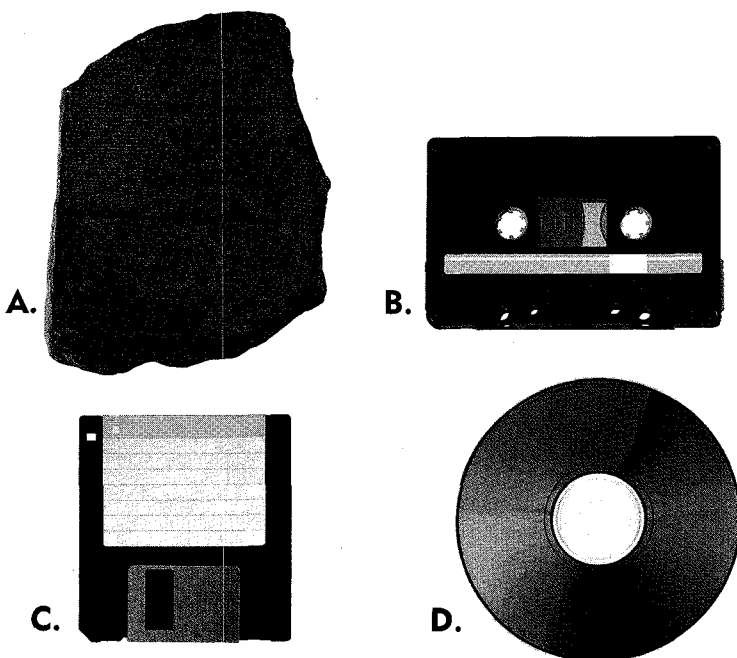
Here's something new to worry about! What if all the material you have accumulated on your computer—financial records, e-mails, photos of the family, elaborate graphs—is destined to disappear in a few years? What would that mean, not simply for retaining useful work-and-business archives but also for capturing and perhaps later savoring the baby pictures, notes from friends, diary entries, and other tokens of passage through life?

The main concern here is not that your files might vanish all at once, in a catastrophic hard-disk failure. Like airline crashes, such events occur but are rare. I have suffered exactly one irretrievable hard-disk failure over the last quarter century. That was in 1994, when I dropped a laptop while on a long overseas trip. I've been more careful about making backups (and carrying computers) since then.

The deeper problem involves a paradox of the digital age. It is easier than ever to generate and store vast quantities of data, but harder to be sure that the information you want will be available later on. A single frame taken by my current digital camera occupies seven megabytes of disk storage—more than was on the entire hard drive of my first IBM PC. An hour's worth of a TV broadcast or a movie can take more than one gigabyte, or more than 1,000 megabytes. As big as our hard drives get, we find ways to fill them. James Billington, the head of the Library of Congress, told me about a report estimating that digital information equivalent in scale to the contents of all the library's books is produced by the world's computers every fifteen minutes.

The convenience is obvious: the PDF file rather than the stack of papers on the desk; the instantly viewable photo rather than the wait for prints from the camera shop; the quick keyword search rather than the need to flip through

Pop quiz: Which data-storage device is the most reliable?



pages to find the desired passage. But this marvelously handy information is strangely transient—especially the information each of us might want to store for our own purposes, as opposed to the Big Brother-style central registries of our phone calls, credit-card transactions, and similar activities.

"The best-preserved data tends to be on stone steles and cuneiform tablets," Billington told me when I went to the library to hear about its recent attempts to solve the "digital preservation" problem. "Papyrus, vellum, parchment—all those classical modes hold up pretty well." Chris Weston, of the library's Office of Strategic Initiatives, recounted what he called a typical story of old-style data preservation. "Someone in upstate New York was cleaning out the attic of an old farmhouse—and there was a letter from Benedict Arnold. It had been in a cool, dry place for 200-some years. With most things on paper, unless you throw them away or actively destroy them, they're likely to stay around."

It's just the reverse, of course, with digital data. Unless you go out of your way to renew and preserve it, information on a computer will disappear fairly quickly. More precisely, it will become unusable. Several related processes are involved. One is what Clay Shirky, a media scholar at New York University, has mock-portentously called "Playback Drift: The Silent Killer." This boils down

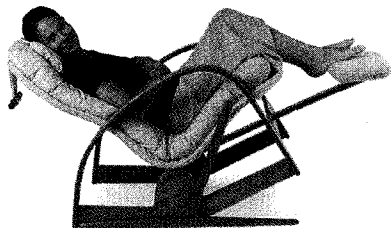
to the idea that the physical devices for storing and then retrieving digital data succeed one another so quickly that information is in constant jeopardy of being trapped in an obsolete format.

The first files I produced on a computer, in the 1970s, were stored on Radio Shack audiotape cassettes. After that, I used a computer with eight-inch floppy disks. The book I wrote twenty-five years ago using that computer still looks fine—but the interview notes for it, which I "saved" on those big old disks, I might just as well have burned. For all practical purposes, there is no way for me to get at them anymore—nor at other information that over the years I've lodged on 5.25-inch disks, small archival high-density tapes, some varieties of Zip drives, and other media that my current computers can't handle. As each new and improved storage system comes out, computers generally remain compatible with the immediate past system but not with anything older. A few years ago, virtually any new PC had a built-in 3.5-inch disk drive. Now such drives are often missing or optional, as CD-ROMs and DVDs have become standard. Eventually the small disks will be obsolete and information on them will be orphaned. Any file stored more than six or eight years ago, and not transferred to something more modern in the meantime, is on its way to doom.

The old files that I still can use—and in fairness, there are a lot of them—are the

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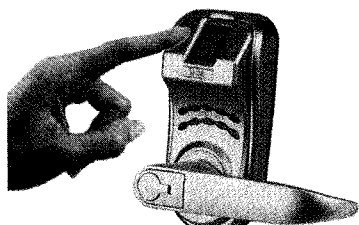
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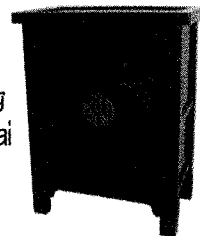


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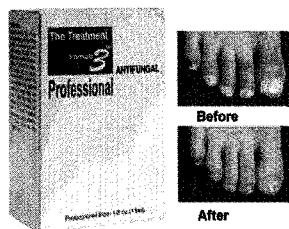
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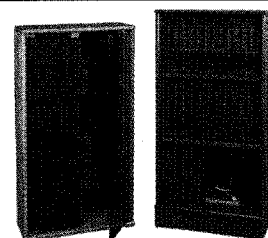
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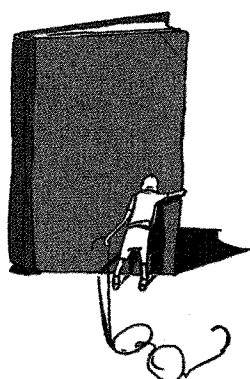
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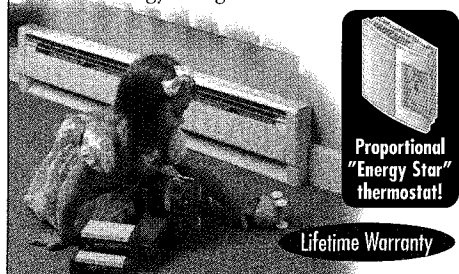
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the ones I've taken the trouble to copy from an old computer to a newer one each time I've bought a new system. But even those files suffer from a different form of playback drift, which is the constant change in file formats. I have word-processing files that were originally created in WordStar, XyWrite, Electric Pencil, DeScribe, and other now-extinct programs. Some can be transferred into the current standard, Word, but not all—and the problem is worse for many database, note-taking, and e-mail programs. As if that were not enough, there is another silent killer: "bit rot." Pictures fade over time, and so, in a sense, does digital information. Both hard and floppy disks store data with tiny magnetic charges. Inevitably, the charges weaken, corrupting and finally eliminating the data. CD-ROMs and DVDs store data by etching pits in a layer of dye, which can also fade. It is as if all of our books and newspapers had been printed with disappearing ink. How long does each kind of degradation take? Some people told me five years on average, some people said fifteen—but in any case, less time than you'd hope to keep those digital pictures of your wedding. Recently I came across a box full of snapshots of my mother as a child, in the 1930s. They survived without being tended; today's counterparts will not.

All of these problems affect institutions on a grand scale. The Library of Congress, as part of its new National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Project, is investing \$100 million to lead a consortium of universities and high-tech companies whose aim is to design new backup systems, convert old data in danger of being orphaned, and generally cope with the flood of high-volume, low-durability digital data. (Details about the full, ambitious program can be found at www.digitalpreservation.gov.)

When I asked James Billington whether there was a precedent for the potential large-scale loss of data the consortium is trying to head off, he said, "Of course! The library at Alexandria." This had been the central repository of the Mediterranean world's knowledge, including the works of the Greek philosophers and playwrights, until it disappeared,

probably in a fire, in the third century. "There was no backup!" Billington said. "And people took it for granted, until it was gone. I'll be frank, that is a major haunting thing for me about our library." He had broader threats to libraries in mind—mainly budgetary, if citizens begin to consider libraries outdated and lose interest in funding them. But the point applied to digital preservation.

How can we be less haunted about our own computers? During a meeting with six members of the library's preservation team, I asked what individuals should do. "Make copies!" they said in unison. One of the library's Internet experts said that if a document was important enough, she would always print it out, as backup for the digital file. (I wish I'd printed out those old interview notes.) Another kept a disk-copying device next to her desktop—and stored the disks in a different building.

Unless you go out of your way to renew and preserve it, information on a computer will disappear fairly quickly. More precisely, it will become unusable.

For both laptop users and mighty institutions, then, preserving digital files is an active rather than passive process. You must transfer files from old tapes or disks to new ones, as storage standards change; you must import information from one program to another whenever you change software; you must rerecord backup files at least every few years, so the information doesn't just crumble away.

Among hardware backup devices, an external hard drive, like the popular Maxtor OneTouch, is the simplest to use, because it can be set to automatically mirror the contents of your computer's hard drive. But an external drive is relatively expensive, at \$300 and up, and if your main computer is affected by fire or flood, so is the nearby backup. Systems that copy your hard disk onto DVDs, tape cassettes, or media that you can take to a different location are cheaper, but they require more fussing with, and to avoid "playback drift" you have to replace them when storage standards change.

Many backup possibilities involve no hardware. With a free utility available at tinyurl.com/4yg48, I've turned a Gmail account into a free online storage system, and it can hold more than two gigabytes' worth of files. For-pay systems like Xdrive, iBackup, and others let you store larger amounts of data online for \$100 a year and up. With Flickr, Snapfish, Shutterfly, and similar online services, you can store and categorize your digital photos. Of course, relying on online storage requires two leaps of faith: faith in the company's durability, that it will still have your notes and pictures two years or ten years from now; and faith in its integrity, that it won't share your information.

My own most important backup system consists of one long-term and one everyday strategy. Every two or three years, when I buy a new desktop or laptop, I make sure that all the contents

of the old machine are copied onto the new one. I may have trouble later on decoding those files that are in Word-Star format, but at least I know where they are. Laplink's PCmover, at \$39.95 and up, automates this process. Then, every day, I sync up any new or altered files between my desktop and laptop machines. For this I use the popular transfer software Laplink Cold, which requires your two computers to be connected—either physically with cables, or wirelessly over a network. It costs around \$100. Services like GoTo MyPC and Laplink Everywhere allow you to connect to your home PC over the Internet and sync up files, for fees of around \$100 to \$180 per year.

The main leap is recognizing that preserving data will be an ongoing semi-hygienic chore, like brushing your teeth or taking out the trash. But this ongoing chore, at least, offers hope for a happy outcome. ▀

James Fallows is a national correspondent for The Atlantic.

FROM THE TECH TOOLBOX

MindManager is an elegant, if expensive (\$229 and up, at www.mindjet.com), PC program for creating "mind maps"—visual layouts of ideas or information. The puzzle is why it has not been available for the Macintosh before, since its design and concept seem straight from the Mac world. That's now been corrected, with a native-Mac version. **FreeMind** (at tinyurl.com/5qrd5) is a less elaborate but free mind mapper for Macs and PCs.

For pure amusement, **Mind Palace** (\$15 after five-day free trial, PC only, at www.mindpalace.com) applies the techniques of memory training made famous in Jonathan D. Spence's book *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*. The idea is to imagine a physical structure, or "memory palace," and fill each room with something you want to remember. Gim-micky, yes, but fun—including for children, for whom the program is tailored. In the same vein, **Visual Thesaurus** (various pricing plans starting at \$2.95 a month, at www.visualthesaurus.com) depicts the relationships among words in an unusual and fascinating way.

More and more Web sites are based on "mashups," or combinations of data and functions from several sources. A map site from USA Track and Field, at tinyurl.com/j5c5l, combines satellite images with new mapping tools to let runners draw and precisely measure routes in their hometowns or any place in America they are visiting. In case anyone hasn't seen it yet, **Zillow.com** combines satellite maps and close-up aerial photos with real-estate and tax-assessment records to produce alarmingly (and addictively) detailed maps of what specific houses might be worth.

Two other tips: **Kayak.com** is, to my knowledge, the current champion in finding the cheapest possible fares for air routes. It rapidly scans the airlines' sites and those of discount brokers and comes up with the best price at the time of your search. You have to act immediately, but the savings can be great. I got a ticket from San Francisco to Shanghai for half the price offered at other sites—on the same airline and flight. And **Ambient Findability**, a recent book by an information-architecture expert named Peter Morville, offers provocative ideas about how the age of search engines will change the way we think. —J.F.

POST MORTEM

The Maestro of Jiggle TV

Aaron Spelling (1923–2006)

BY MARK STEYN

In his essay “The Myth of ‘Classic’ TV,” Terry Teachout argues just that—that, while *The New York Times* may regard *The Sopranos* as “the greatest work of American popular culture of the last quarter-century,” and *The Nation* may truly believe that the show’s “underlying themes evoke George Eliot,” in the end it will end and go away. As Teachout points out, before *The Sopranos* there were *Twin Peaks* and *Northern Exposure* and *Hill Street Blues*—and when was the last time you heard anyone say a word about them?

Indeed, the more “classic” your show, the more ephemeral it is. Getting into Ovid or Gregorian chant is a piece of cake next to getting into *thirtysomething* fifteen years on. Conceivably, one might find oneself in a motel room unable to sleep at four in the morning and surfing the channels come across *St. Elsewhere*. But they made 137 episodes of multiple complex interrelated plotlines all looping back to Episode 1: if you’ve never seen it before and you stumble on Episode 43, who the hell are all these people and what are they on about? By comparison, if you happen to catch, say, an episode of *Naked City* from the late ’50s, you might not know who the detectives are or recognize Billy May’s wailing theme tune, and the whole monochrome thing might be a bit of a downer, but you can still pass a pleasant hour with a self-contained one-hour cop drama. The “better” television got at its art, the more transient it became. I doubt *The Sopranos* will be an exception to this rule. Ninety percent of all the people who’ll ever be into it are already into it. That’s not true of *Lucia di Lammermoor* or “My Funny Valentine.”

But in between all the classics comes the stuff Aaron Spelling cranked out, year after year, decade after decade—*The Mod Squad*, *The Love Boat*, *Dynasty*,

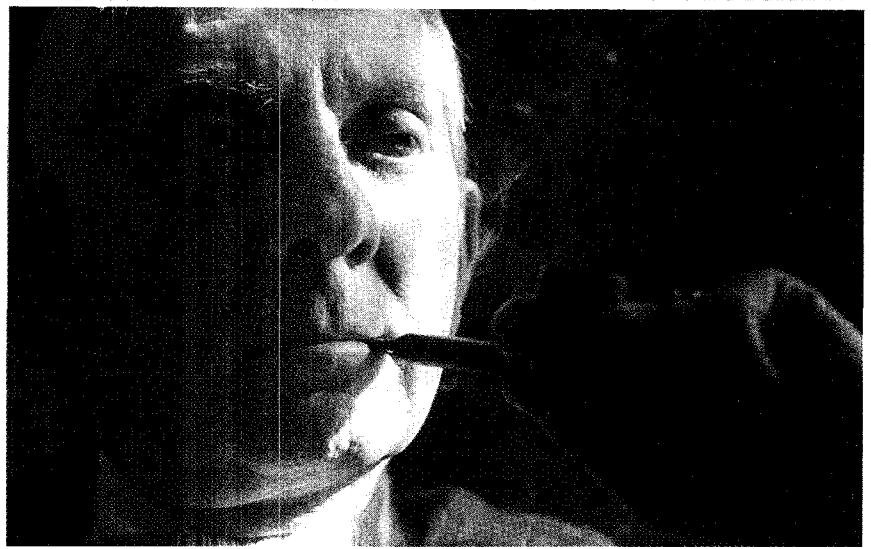
Beverly Hills 90210, *7th Heaven*, the stuff nobody ever compares to Dickens or George Eliot. In a town where not so long ago Jerry Lewis demanded of some executive supremo, “What do you know? You’re *twelve*,” Aaron Spelling was 112, give or take, and still a power. He was like Afghanistan’s King Zahir at the post-Taliban *loya jirga*: the only old man in a land where male life expectancy is forty-three. His career stretched back to the dawn of television: he appeared in an episode of *I Love Lucy*, playing the pump jockey at the gas station in Bent Fork, Tennessee, to which Lucy, Ricky, Fred, and Ethel repair in order to visit Lucy’s country cousin, Tennessee Ernie Ford.

Spelling was given his entrée into writing and production by Dick Powell—the Dick Powell who introduced “Pettin’ in the Park” in *Gold Diggers of 1933*. A quarter century on, Powell was hosting *Dick Powell’s Zane Grey Theater* on CBS, and young Aaron overheard him on the lot telling the head of the William Morris Agency that he was sick of the yawneroo intros he had to read for each episode: “In tonight’s story, Tom meets Jane, Jane turns out to be already married, and you’ll find out how they resolve their problems . . .” So Spelling went home and wrote six little intros that sidled up to tonight’s theme in a more whimsical way: Powell would be in a western graveyard reading tombstones heartfelt and less so (“Stole a cow that wasn’t his’n / was hung before he got to prison”). The star went for it, and for 125 bucks a pop Spelling wrote all the intros that season, and then graduated to writing episodes. If he liked a script, Powell would sing “I Only Have Eyes for You,” which he’d introduced in

Dames (1934). Spelling heard a lot of “I Only Have Eyes for You” in those early years, and in the four decades afterward a lot of Americans mostly had eyes for him: one night in the ’70s, more than half the television sets in the country were tuned to *Charlie’s Angels*.

What is it that makes real classic TV? Flippy hair (*Charlie’s Angels*)? Shoulder pads (*Dynasty*)? A 1974 red Ford Torino (*Starsky & Hutch*)? A hokey sub-lounge theme song (*The Love Boat*)? An Anglo-French midget excitedly yelling “De plane! De plane!” (*Fantasy Island*)? Or some subtle combination of these elements that that schmuck who wrote *Middlemarch* could never have cooked up in a hundred years? Who knows? The networks didn’t. “Get rid of the little guy,” advised an NBC exec after the *Fantasy Island* pilot. Eventually Spelling did, but only after Hervé Villechaize demanded as much per episode as Ricardo Montalbán and hung on his trailer door a sign saying THE DOCTOR OF SEX. From *The Mod Squad* on, he gradually figured it out: new young talent but with a presiding father-figure type to hook the older crowd and plenty of room for starry guest shots. *Charlie’s Angels* was the ne plus ultra of the formula: three hot chicks at work, but you never saw their boss—i.e., that could be you, Mister Average Couch Potato, those gals are running around for.

We don’t really have *popular* culture anymore, so much as a fragmented market crowded with expertly segmented, mutually hostile opposing camps of various forms of unpopular popular culture. Spelling was one of the last masters of universal pop culture—shows offering fun for young and old. He discovered a



ton of new stars—from Farrah Fawcett to Shannen Doherty—and gave a lot of older players a grand last hurrah—from John Forsythe to Joan Collins—and resurrected most of Hollywood’s Golden Age for somewhat improbable guest shots on *The Love Boat*: Lana Turner, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Ginger Rogers, Don Ameche, Lillian Gish.

Not so long ago, I happened to catch the tail end of *Tales of Manhattan* (1942), which I vaguely recalled having enjoyed on a rainy afternoon when I was nine or so. It’s about a rental tuxedo that gets passed from Charles Boyer to Henry Fonda to Edward G. Robinson and so on. Apparently it was Aaron Spelling’s favorite childhood movie, the one he never forgot, and the one whose principal elements—fancy clothes, star guests, multiple plots—stand for much of his oeuvre, as Spelling Enterprises rented out its tux from Gene Barry in *Burke’s Law* to Robert Wagner in *Hart to Hart* to Charlton Heston in *The Colbys*.

Charlie’s Angels was the ne plus ultra of Spelling’s formula: three hot chicks, and you never saw their boss—i.e., that could be you, Mister Average Couch Potato, those gals are running around for.

T. J. Hooker and *Starsky & Hutch* varied the look a little, but those long woolly cardigans of Paul Michael Glaser started a fashion craze on both sides of the Atlantic. I was in a bar in London about twelve years ago when a predatory woman of a certain age said that even now what turned her on the most were “men in Starsky cardies.” I don’t mind being manacled upside down and flayed with a cat-o’-nine-tails, but some tastes are just too kinky.

Plots? Dialogue? Oh, to be sure, Spelling shows had those, too. Hitchcock liked to refer to the “MacGuffin”—the device, the missing papers, the secret formula that jump-starts the plot. But nobody ever put the guff in the MacGuffin

like a Spelling show did: in *The Colbys*, Charlton Heston was obsessed with something called the “Imos Project”; for years on *Dynasty*, John Forsythe and Joan Collins feuded over a mysterious “pipeline” they and their various shadow companies exchanged gazillions of dollars’ worth of stock options over. There was as much plot as on *St. Elsewhere* or *thirtysomething*, but the shows managed to signal that none of it really mattered, which was just as well by the time we got to the late-season twists about Fallon being abducted by aliens. If you want an exchange that encapsulates the series’ cheery insouciance to plot, it’s Heather Locklear being reintroduced to Joan Collins: “Weren’t you my mother-in-law at one time?” Late in the Clinton era, I came across the president telling Susan Estrich, “They have no idea what we went through to save this marriage . . . Or perhaps how important it was that we did—not just for the country, but for the two of us.” And I realized *The Clintons*

term deriving from the way Kate Jackson, Farrah Fawcett, and Jaclyn Smith spent most of their time running around while their finer points bounced around the screen like a primitive computer game. Jiggle has been in short supply in Hollywood since the hard-body look came in. When the gals on *90210* or *Melrose* ran around, heads, arms, legs all move, but the breasts stayed fixed on course with the precision of a cruise missile.

The *90210* life was a long way from Spelling’s own youth. Growing up as a child of Jewish immigrants in Texas, he’d always wanted a rocking horse, but his folks couldn’t afford one, and then one day his mom told him to look outside—and there it was! And he went out in the street and climbed up on it, and a photographer snapped a picture—and then they took the rocking horse away. Mom and Dad had paid a nickel for the photographer and another nickel to rent the horse. Little Aaron cried the rest of the day. When his daughter, Tori, was born, he went out and bought her a rocking horse.

Asked to recount his rags-to-mega-riches rise from Jewish schnook on the wrong side of the tracks in Dallas to Hollywood power broker living in the largest private residence in the State of California (56,000-plus square feet), Spelling had a string of anecdotes: the *Variety* writer who came up with the headline “Stix Nix Hick Pix” hires him as the band boy for his wife’s all-girl band; Preston Sturges comes to see his play; Vincente Minnelli casts him in *Kismet* as a dingy beggar and gives him only one line: “Alms for the love of Allah.” And it was such an unrewarding experience that the hick nixed the pix and moved from acting into writing, producing, and jiggling.

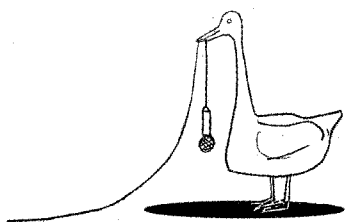
What a story. His life read like a script for one of his TV movies, adapted from Jackie Collins or Sidney Sheldon.

Or, anyway, it read like a treatment. Which he would have taken as a compliment. ▀

Mark Steyn is a columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times and other publications.

was the show Spelling missed, the D.C. version of *Dynasty*, in which occasional references to “the country” and “the government” and “Bob Dole” were merely the equivalent of “the pipeline” and the “Imos Project,” just a pretext for the extramarital sex. But by then Spelling had moved on—to the teens of *90210* and the twentysomethings of *Melrose Place*.

He was proudest of *Family*, the semi-credible issue drama with Meredith Baxter and Kristy McNicol that ran from 1976 to 1980. But of all Spelling’s ’70s shows it’s the one that resonates least today—and I’ll bet he understood that. He changed with the times. For example, *Charlie’s Angels* was said to have ushered in the era of “jiggle TV,” an industry



WORD COURT

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

GERRIT PETERSEN, of Brookline, Mass., writes: "With increasing frequency, I've been hearing the phrase *to step foot in* substituted for the common idiom *to set foot in*, primarily on television. The phrase troubles me every time I hear it. Please step in and set me, or someone, straight."

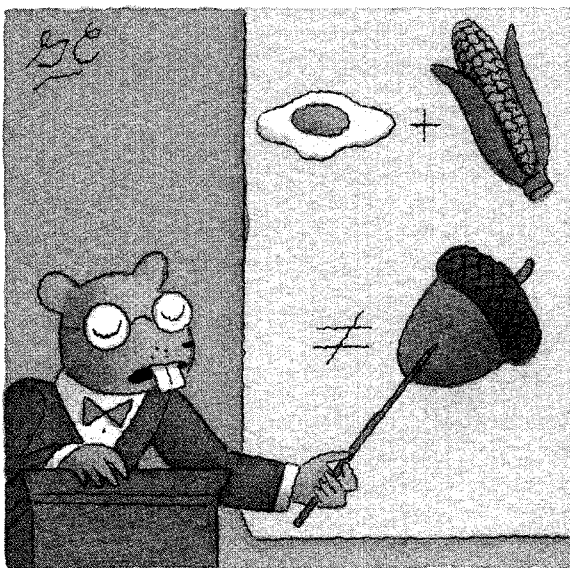
It's true that *set foot in* is far and away the more common phrase. And thirteen citations that include *set foot in* are scattered around the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the earliest of which (illustrating the use of the now obsolete and rare word *reguerdonment*, meaning "reward") is from 1599. But the version you don't like, *step foot in*, is also in the *OED*, with citations dating back to 1540. According to a note under *step*, it's now seen and heard only in the United States.

The question remains whether we ought to consider it a mistake. Citations in the *OED* include, without demur, many words and phrases widely regarded as incorrect—for instance, *baited breath*, *free reign*, *hone in*, and *all ready* meaning "already." Some of these are very old and appear in sentences that modern readers would consider rife (which is not to say *ripe*) with mistakes. For instance, from a 1533 book by John Frith: "When we say that such a man hath delyuered his freende from the gallowes, we mean not that he was *all ready* hanged." Others are modern. For instance, from a 2002 magazine article: "Balanchine's classes were famous for *honing in* on the basics." Ouch.

Language geeks have given the name *eggcorns* to usages of this kind—"spontaneous reshapings of known expressions" which seem to make sense. (*Eggcorn* is itself an eggcorn, for *acorn*.) Whether *step foot in* is, or originally was,

an eggcorn has been hotly but inconclusively debated. However, no one argues that *set foot in* is anything other than standard English. So *step foot in* is one of those phrases that we're probably better off not using even though there's little reason to object if others use them.

SUZANNE STASZAK-SILVA, of Scotch Plains, N.J., writes: "My husband and I have a dispute regarding the use of the term *landline*. When people receive or make calls on a cellular



phone but decide they would like to take the call on a phone connected to the wall via a phone jack, they usually refer to this phone as a *landline*. My husband says this is incorrect and the right term is *LAN* (local-area network) *line*. I say he's wrong. I think people use *landline* to denote a phone that is connected to the large brown poles that line our streets, and that *LAN line* refers to computer connections. Who is correct?"

You are. Anyone who doesn't want to call a phone line a *phone line* ought to call it a *WAN* (wide-area network) *line*. And thanks for the new eggcorn.

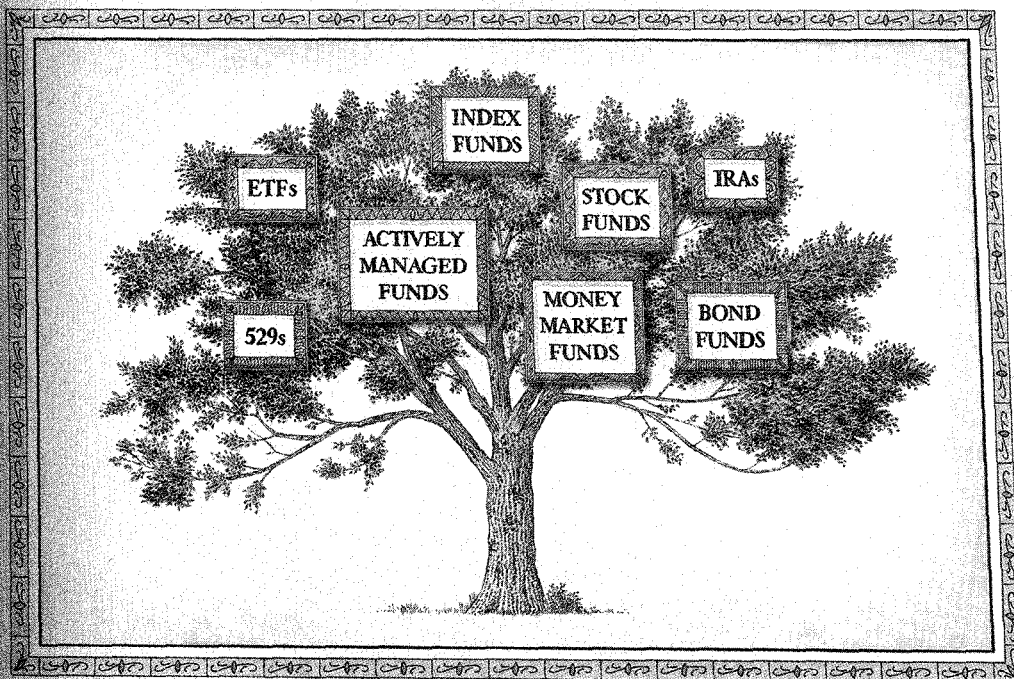
WILLIAM D. SHARPE, of Springfield, Mo., writes: "Recently an acquaintance referred to his high-school alma mater as a *magnate school*. I jokingly asked if his school was named after J. P. Morgan, and said that I was under the impression that such schools were, in fact, referred to as *magnet schools*, the implication being that they attract bright students. He was quite insistent that his school was known as a *magnate school*. He claimed the name referred to such schools' usual mission of concentrating on a particular area of study and turning out students who had expertise in that area—that is, magnates. Your opinion?"

Another eggcorn! As you know, *magnate* doesn't just mean "an expert"; it means "a powerful or influential person, especially in business or industry," as *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines the word. Top-ranked graduate schools of business might qualify as *magnate schools*, but that's about it.

To see hundreds of other eggcorns, visit the Eggcorn Database, at www.eggcorns.lascribe.net. As of this writing, *magnate* for *magnet* isn't listed there, though the opposite error is (together with some commentary about whether this is really an eggcorn or just a spelling mistake). An example in the database, culled from *Details* magazine, is "I was ... reading over an American woman's shoulder as she e-mailed a friend about her plans for the rest of July: 'I'm going to find a shipping *magnet* and marry him!'"

Do you have a language dispute? Write to Word Court in care of The Atlantic Monthly, P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or send e-mail to msggrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court. Ms. Grammar is also on the Web, at www.theatlantic.com/courtrecord.

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